Eliza Mary Bodenham
From her faithful friend

ENGLAND'S CONVERSION AND REFORMATION COMPARED:

OR, THE

YOUNG GENTLEMAN DIRECTED IN THE CHOICE OF HIS RELIGION.

TO WHICH IS PREMISED,

A BRIEF ENQUIRY INTO THE

GENERAL GROUNDS

OF THE

CATHOLIC FAITH;

IN A

CONVERSATION BETWEEN

A

YOUNG GENTLEMAN AND HIS PRECEPTOR.

DIVIDED INTO FOUR DIALOGUES.

James Mc Donnell

ROBERT MANNING

Examine yourselves whether you be in the Faith.
2 COR. xiii. 5.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.
THESS. V. 21.

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MAY

THE PREFACE.

THE following dialogues are chiefly intended for the benefit of young gentlemen, as ſtanding moſt in need of being ſtrongly fortified with ſound principles, and a deep ſenſe of religion againſt the dangerous temptations of worldly intereſt, liberty and eaſe.

In order to this end, the whole ſubject of the firſt dialogue is an enquiry into thoſe general grounds of revealed religion, which young perſons, already well inſtructed in the firſt rudiments of the Chriſtian doctrine, ought to be thoroughly acquainted with. And for this reaſon I have endeavoured to bring them into as ſmall a compaſs, and render them as eaſy as the matter would bear; being ſenſible, that young men are no lovers either of long or hard leſſons; and learn with pleaſure when neither their memories are overcharged, nor their underſtandings put upon the rack. But the aboveſaid enquiry is intended only as an introduction to my principal deſign, which is to direct them in the choice of their religion, and lead them by clear marks to that one, holy, Catholic, and apoſtolic church, in which the faith and religion revealed by God, has been inviolably preſerved throughout all ages, and will continue to be taught in its full purity to the end of the world.

Now, ſince no man can either make a rational choice of his religion, or continue rationally in that, wherein he has been educated, unleſs he has ſolid motives to determine him to it, (which is effectually chooſing his religion, as being a deliberate preference of one before another) I could not think of a more proper method to

direct my young gentleman (who is ſuppoſed to have been brought up in the principles of the church of Rome) in this important choice, ſo as to make it wholly the reſult of a full conviction of judgment, than by comparing the Roman Catholic religion, which was brought into England by its converſion from paganiſm to Chriſtianity, with the religion now eſtabliſhed by law, which was introduced nine hundred years after by the ſo much celebrated *Engliſh reformation*. For by comparing the one with the other, a judgment may be formed even by perſons of no learning, which of the two has the clear marks of truth on its ſide, and of having had the Holy Ghoſt for its principal director. And though for the ſake of brevity, as well as perſpicuity, my compariſon will, for the moſt part, go no farther, than the Roman Catholic religion on the one ſide, and that of the reformed church of England on the other, it will nevertheleſs be equally applicable to all the other *Proteſtant* churches, and they will all have their ſhare either in the advantage or diſadvantage of the iſſue of this cauſe, to what ſide ſoever the balance ſhall appear to incline.

The whole ſubject therefore of the fourth and laſt dialogue, is an hiſtorical compariſon between the moſt material circumſtances of England's converſion on the one hand, and of its reformation on the other. But ſince this compariſon cannot appear in its true light without a competent knowledge of the hiſtory of theſe two great eccleſiaſtical revolutions, I preſent my young readers, in the ſecond and third dialogues, with a brief but faithful account of the moſt important facts relating to the one as well as to the other; I mean, the converſion of the Engliſh Saxons by the preaching of St. Auguſtin and his followers, and the ſtupendous changes made by our Engliſh reformers in the religion brought into this iſland by thoſe apoſtolical preachers. To which I have nevertheleſs premiſed a relation of the converſion of the ancient Britons four hundred years before that of the Saxons; by reaſon of the frequent mention I make of it, and the connection it has with a material point diſcuſſed in the 8th ſection of the 2d dialogue.

But being ſenſible, that in compiling my ſhort hiſtory of the Engliſh reformation I was travelling in an enemy's country, I found myſelf obliged to take my ſteps very warily, and not to truſt to any but Proteſtant guides to conduct me forward in my way. Becauſe all others, though ever ſo unexceptionable in themſelves, might be ſuſpected at leaſt of ſome degree of partiality, or prepoſſeſſion in favour of their own cauſe.

When with this caution I had almoſt gone through the three *reforming* reigns of Henry VIII. Edward VI. and queen Elizabeth, the biſhop of Meaux's HISTOIRE DES VARIATIONS, &c. was put into my hands, and recommended to my peruſal. It is divided into 15 Books, the 7th whereof treats wholly of the changes in religion in England under Henry VIII. and his ſucceſſor Edward VI. Thoſe made by queen Elizabeth are briefly related in his 13th book.

I confeſs it was no ſmall ſatisfaction to me to find the ſhort account I have given of thoſe changes, and even my reflections upon them, agree in every thing that is material with that celebrated author. But what compleated my ſatisfaction, was the declaration he makes at his entrance upon that ſubject, that Burnet's own hiſtory of the reformation has furniſhed him with all his choiceſt materials for that part of his work; and that every fact of moment related in it, whatever advantage may be drawn from it in favour of the Catholic cauſe, has that zealous Proteſtant author for it's voucher; who, I dare ſay, was never guilty of a lie in favour of Popery. Whence I draw this conſequence, that my relation of thoſe facts, beſides it being corroborated by other Proteſtant witneſſes, has likewiſe a juſt title to the benefit of the biſhop of Sarum's protection, and will undoubtedly be ſkreened from all ſuſpicion of falſhood by the authority of his unexceptionable teſtimony. I call it unexceptionable, in reference to facts, which bear hard upon the honour both of the reformation in general, and in particular of his great reforming hero, archbiſhop Cranmer. Unleſs the reputation of his veracity be ſunk ſo low, that he cannot ſafely be

believed even againſt himſelf. Which I think is too ſevere a reflection upon his memory.

I ſhall therefore endeavour to prevent the prepoſſeſſion, which ſome may be apt to have againſt the truth of the facts I ſhall relate, by a faithful tranſlation of the aboveſaid part of the biſhop of Meaux's hiſtory, all taken, as I have ſaid, from Burnet's own hiſtory of the reformation. I intend however, for brevity's ſake, to omit every thing, that has not an immediate tendency to my principal deſign. The places, where any thing is omitted, will be marked after the uſual manner with ſhort lines. I ſhall alſo ſpare myſelf the trouble of quoting the number of the pages ſet down every where in the margin of the biſhop of Meaux's book. Becauſe there muſt of neceſſity be a great difference between the number of pages in the Engliſh original of Burnet's hiſtory, and the French tranſlation of it, which the biſhop of Meaux has followed. In effect, all that can be required of me, is an exact fidelity in delivering the true ſenſe of my author; which if any one be diſpoſed to doubt of, he has it in his power to ſatisfy himſelf with little or no trouble.

The biſhop of Meaux introduces his account of the Engliſh reformation with obſerving, that monſieur Burnet, as he always ſtiles him, has very much overſtrained his matter, in triumphing moſt unmercifully over the church of Rome, on the ſcore of a few groundleſs ſtories (as indeed they have always appeared to me) related by Dr. Sanders in his book *de Schiſmate Anglicano*; which, however, whether they be true or falſe, are of ſuch a trivial nature, as not to touch in the leaſt the heart of the cauſe. But it ſeems Mr. Burnet either wanted ſome better topic to flouriſh upon, or was of opinion, that nothing can be writ unjudiciouſly againſt the church of Rome, ſo it be but exorbitantly ſcurrilous and malicious; as will appear from the piece quoted by the biſhop of Meaux, where Burnet ſpeaking of that church, tells his reader with the gravity of an oracle, that a religion grounded upon falſhood, and raiſed upon impoſture, cannot maintain itſelf, but by the

the ſame means, which gave birth to it. And again, Sanders's book, ſays he, may be very ſerviceable to a church, which hitherto has raiſed itſelf by falſhoods and manifeſt forgeries.

Now what could have been ſaid more outrageous, though it were the avowed practice of Catholic writers to cram their books as full with lies and calumnies, as the few lines are, which I have preſented the reader with, as a ſmall ſpecimen of this author's admirable talent that way? But it is no great ſurprize, that a perſon, whoſe poiſonous pen has blaſted the reputation of ſo many among the living as well as the dead, ſhould have the confidence to raiſe his voice ſo very loud to cry out murder firſt; or, as a modern Proteſtant writer expreſſes it, ſhould pick out thoſe very crimes to charge others with, of which his own conſcience muſt needs tell him, he is ſo guilty himſelf.

But what makes him ſo very angry at Dr. Sanders? I gueſs the reaſon to be chiefly, becauſe this author had not the ſame favourable opinion as himſelf of Mrs. Anne Bolen's virtue, whom he ſeems to regard as a kind of protectreſs in her time of the Proteſtant cauſe: And as this is with him a merit, which covers all defects, he ſtrains hard to juſtify her conduct upon all occaſions; but eſpecially before ſhe was raiſed to the high dignity of being queen conſort of England; whereas Dr. Sanders, who was perhaps too credulous in believing common reports, has related ſome ſtories of her, whilſt ſhe was maid of honour in France, which reflect hard upon the honour of her ſex. Now for my part, I can neither think her ſo innocent as Burnet will needs make her, nor yet ſo guilty as ſhe is repreſented by Dr. Sanders. But whether ſhe was guilty, or innocent there, the Catholic or Proteſtant intereſt is ſo little concerned in it, that farther than to ſatisfy an idle curioſity, I would not give a groat to be certifyed of the truth of either. Though Burnet, that zealous lover of truth, is pleaſed to make as tragical a buſineſs of thoſe few trivial ſtories, as if they ſtruck at the very vitals, or ſapped the very foundations of the Proteſtant cauſe.

But let us now hear this gaſconade upon the excellency of the reformation; which he ſets forth in oppoſition to the religion, he had ſpoken ſo vilely of before. The reformation, ſays he, is a work of light, which ſtands in no need of the help of ſhades to heighten its luſtre, and a plain hiſtory of it is its beſt juſtification. Theſe are fine words indeed; but I am confident that they will be found to be mere words without the teſtimony of facts to ſupport them. And in reality nothing could have been ſaid of it more glorious and magnificent, though it had all the ſame viſible marks of the divine authority and approbation ſtamped upon it, as appeared in the firſt converſion of the world to Chriſtianity. This is the biſhop of Meaux's judicious obſervation; who therefore readily accepts of his adverſary's propoſal, to put the whole matter to the teſt of a plain hiſtorical narration. And it is here he takes occaſion to tell his reader, that he ſtands in no need of a Sanders to come to his aid, but that monſ. Burnet alone will ſuffice to furniſh him with a ſeries of facts, upon which a true and impartial judgment may be formed of his ſo much boaſted work of light. Probably he may be thought by his own party to have intended it for a banter. But let us hear the biſhop of Meaux's ſhort hiſtory of it.

" The firſt important fact I take notice of (ſays he) " in Monſieur Burnet, aſſerted in his very preface, and " frequently confirmed in the body of his book, is, that " when Henry VIII. began the reformation, he ſeemed " to intend no more than to intimidate the court of " Rome, and oblige the pope to give him ſome ſatis- " faction. For in his heart he always believed the moſt " extravagant opinions of the church of Rome. Such " as tranſubſtantiation, and other corruptions relating " to the ſacrifice of the Maſs. So that he died in the " communion rather of the Roman than Proteſtant " church. But whatever Mr. Burnet is pleaſed to ſay, " we are not diſpoſed to accept of the communion, " which he ſeems to offer us, of that prince; and ſince " he throws him out of his own, the immediate con- " ſequence of this fact is, that the firſt author of the

" Engliſh

" Engliſh reformation, who in reality laid the founda-
" tion of it by the hatred he inſtilled into his ſubjects
" againſt the pope and the church of Rome, is a perſon
" equally rejected and anathematized by both parties.

" But what appears moſt remarkable in this prince
" is, that not content to believe with his heart, and
" profeſs with his mouth the moſt extravagant cor-
" ruptions of the church of Rome, as Mr. Burnet calls
" them, he even gave them the force of a parliamen-
" tary law, by virtue of his new-acquired ſpiritual
" ſupremacy,————and obliged both Thomas
" Cromwell and archbiſhop Cranmer (though Luther-
" ans in their hearts) as well as others, not only to
" ſubſcribe to them, but to ſee them put in practice
" throughout the whole kingdom.

" This Thomas Cromwell was he, whom king
" Henry, in quality of ſupreme head of the church,
" conſtituted his vicar or viceregent general. By virtue
" whereof, though he was but a ſimple laick, and con-
" tinued ſo to his death, he was placed at the head of
" the whole prelatic order in all eccleſiaſtical affairs.
" This dignity was never heard of before, either in
" the liſt of officers of the crown of England, or of
" the empire, or of any Chriſtian kingdom in the
" world. So that Henry VIII. was the firſt who
" ſhewed England, and the Chriſtian world, a tem-
" poral lord ſitting at the helm of eccleſiaſtical govern-
" ment, in quality of the king's viceregent general in
" ſpirituals.

" Thomas Cranmer, archbiſhop of Canterbury, was
" Cromwell's intimate friend, and had the chief ma-
" nagement of the deſign they were projecting to-
" wards a reformation. This is Mr. Burnet's great
" hero. For he gives up king Henry as a perſon,
" whoſe viciouſneſs and cruelty were too public to be
" concealed. But he was ſenſible, that to own the like
" immoralities in Cranmer, whom he regards as the
" primary inſtrument of the reformation, would una-
" voidably give us a very bad opinion of that work.
" He is therefore very profuſe in his eulogiums of that
" prelate; and not content to admire upon all occaſi-

" ons his moderation, his piety, and prudence, he " goes ſo far, as even to repreſent him as one equal, if " not ſuperior, to St. Athanaſius and St. Cyril; and " of ſo uncommon a merit, that he ſticks not to ſay, " that perhaps no prelate of God's church ever had ſo " many eminent qualities, and fewer faults.

" But to prevent our being impoſed upon by theſe " pompous eulogiums, let us examine the hiſtory of " his life from facts related by Mr. Burnet himſelf, " his perpetual admirer; and conſider at the ſame " time the ſpirit of the man, to whom the Engliſh " reformation owes its being.

" From the year 1529 Thomas Cranmer had put " himſelf at the head of that party, which favoured " the king's divorce from queen Catharine; and his in- " tended marriage with Anne Bolen. An. 1530. he " wrote a book againſt the validity of his marriage with " queen Catharine; and it is eaſy to gueſs how accept- " able this was to a prince, whoſe predominant paſſion " it flattered. From that time forward he began to be " conſidered at court as a kind of favourite, and one that " ſtood fair to exceed cardinal Woolſey in that rank. " He was at that time addicted to the Lutheran doc- " trine; and, as Mr. Burnet tells us, looked upon as " the moſt learned of thoſe, who favoured it ſecretly " in their hearts. Anne Bolen, ſays the ſame author, " had likewiſe received ſome tincture of that doctrine. " But after that he repreſents her as one perfectly " united in religion with thoſe, whom he calls reform- " ers: By which word we muſt always underſtand all " ſuch, as were ſecret or open enemies to the Maſs and " doctrine of the Catholic church. He adds, that all " of this party were avowed abettors of the divorce. " It was this that linked Cranmer and his adherents ſo " cloſely to the king's miſtreſs. This laid the foun- " dation of his greatneſs, and gave birth to the Engliſh " reformation. The unfortunate Henry, who ſuſpected " nothing of this ſecret aſſociation, or the end it had " in view, became himſelf inſenſibly a kind of aſſo- " ciate with the enemies of that faith, which he had " till then maintained with ſo much honour; and by

" their

" their underhand contrivances, let himſelf, without " knowing what he did, become ſubſervient to the " deſigns they had to effect its deſtruction.

" Cranmer was ſent to Rome upon the buſineſs of " the divorce; where he played the hypocrite ſo " well, that the pope made him his penitentiary; " which ſhews that he was then a prieſt; and though " a Lutheran in his heart, he made no ſcruple to ac- " cept of that charge. From Rome he paſſed into " Germany to manage there his maſter's intereſt with " his good Proteſtant friends; and here it was that he " married Oſiander's ſiſter.

" In the mean time the ſee of Canterbury became " vacant by the death of archbiſhop Warham. Cran- " mer was nominated to it by the king, and accepted " it. The pope, who knew no other error in him " than his opinion concerning the nullity of king " Henry's marriage, which was then undecided, ſent " him his bulls; which as ſoon as he had received, he " ſtuck not to contaminate himſelf with the foul cha- " racter of the beaſt, as was the uſual Proteſtant lan- " guage of thoſe times.

" At his conſecration he took the uſual oath of " obedience to the pope, though not without ſome " ſcruple, as Mr. Burnet tells us. But he had a pli- " able conſcience, and ſalved all by proteſting, that he " did not intend by that oath to reſtrain himſelf from " any thing he was bound to by his duty to God, the " king, and his country. Which proteſtation was wholly " frivolous. For who of us all pretends to bind himſelf " by that oath to any thing contrary to his conſcience, " or the duty he owes to his king and country?——— " In ſhort, this oath is either an inſignificant form of " empty words, or it obliges the perſon who takes it " to own the ſpiritual ſupremacy of the pope. Cran- " mer therefore owned it in words, though he believed " nothing of it. Mr. Burnet grants, that this expedient " made uſe of by Cranmer was not ſuitable to his ſin- " cerity; and to ſoften as well as he can ſuch a criminal " diſſimulation, he adds ſoon after, that if Cranmer did " not wholly ſave his integrity, yet he intended to act

" fairly

" fairly and above board. But what then is deceit or " unfair dealing? Can any thing be more deceitful " or unfair, than to ſwear what a man believes nothing " of, and come prepared with a proteſtation expreſſed " in equivocal terms to elude the plain meaning of an " oath he is going to take?

" But Mr. Burnet has been careful not to tell us, " that Cranmer, who was ordained with all the cere- " monies of the Roman pontifical, beſides the oath, " which he pretended to elude, made ſeveral other de- " clarations, againſt which he did not proteſt. As, to " receive with ſubmiſſion the traditions of the fathers, " the conſtitutions of the holy apoſtolic ſee; to pay obe- " dience to St. Peter in the perſon of the pope and his " ſucceſſors according to the canons, and to live chaſtly. " Which according to the intention of the church ex- " preſsly declared, when a perſon is ordained ſubdea- " con, implies a promiſe of celibacy and continency. " This Mr. Burnet has concealed from us. Neither has " he told us that Cranmer, according to cuſtom, ſaid " Maſs at his conſecration; whereas he ought to have " likewiſe proteſted againſt this act, and all the Maſſes " he ſaid in his own cathedral during the remainder of " king Henry's life; that is, for the ſpace of thirteen " years: Mr. Burnet has paſſed over in ſilence all theſe " noble feats of his hero. As likewiſe that when he or- " dained prieſts (which he could not avoid doing in ſo " many years) he performed that ceremony in the " words preſcribed by the Roman pontifical; in which, " as neither in the Maſs, king Henry had not made any " alterations. He therefore gave them the power of " changing by their holy benediction the bread and " wine into the body and blood of Chriſt, and to offer " up the ſacrifice of the Maſs both for the living and " the dead. It would have been of greater importance to " proteſt againſt all theſe things ſo oppoſite to Luther- " aniſm, than againſt the oath of obedience to the pope. " But the miſchief was, that king Henry, who reliſhed " well enough his proteſtation againſt the pope's ſupre- " macy, would not have born with it in other things;

" and

" and therefore Cranmer thought it was beſt to diſſem-
" ble.

" Here therefore we have him all at once a Lu-
" theran, a married man, an archbiſhop according to
" the Roman pontifical, bound by an oath of obedience
" to the pope, whoſe authority he hated in his heart,
" and not only ſaying Maſs himſelf, but giving to
" others the power to do it, though he believed
" nothing of it. Yet this man, according to Mr. Bur-
" net, was a ſecond Athanaſius; a ſecond Cyril, and
" one of the moſt accompliſhed prelates the church
" ever had. What opinion muſt we then have of thoſe
" two great men? Or if St. Baſil, St. Ambroſe, St. Au-
" guſtin, or many others, if they neither had more
" conſpicuous virtues, nor fewer faults than a perſon,
" who for many years together practiſed things, which
" in his heart he judged to be the very hight of ſacri-
" lege and abomination.———

" As ſoon as Cranmer was promoted to the ſee of
" Canterbury, he began to make an intereſt in the par-
" liament in favour of the divorce. The king had
" been privately married to Anne Bolen in the year
" 1532, and ſhe appearing big with child, it could
" not be concealed any longer. Here then the arch-
" biſhop, who was privy to it, began to ſignalize him-
" ſelf, and ſhewed much vigour in flattering the
" king's paſſion. He wrote to him with an archiepiſ-
" copal authority a ſerious letter upon his inceſtuous
" marriage with Catharine, which, ſaid he, was a
" ſcandal to the whole world, and declared he would
" not tolerate ſo great a ſcandal any longer. Here we
" have a man of true courage, and a ſecond John Baſ-
" tiſt. Soon after he called a court, and cited the
" king and queen before him. The queen not ap-
" pearing, he pronounced her contumacious, and by a
" definitive ſentence declared her marriage void from
" the beginning. Five days after he confirmed the
" king's private marriage with Anne Bolen; though he
" had been married to her ſome time before the nullity
" of his firſt marriage was declared. But archbiſhop

" Cranmer

" Cranmer made no ſcruple to ratify ſuch an irregular
" proceeding."

Soon after the divorce the king was ſolemnly excommunicated by the pope, and then made ſupreme head of the church of England by the parliament. The biſhop of Meaux touches but paſſingly upon theſe two latter facts, and then proceeds to ſpeak of Henry's exceſſive cruelty in the ten laſt years of his reign, for which he quotes ſeveral paſſages in Burnet's hiſtory. But the frequent and promiſcuous executions of Proteſtants as well as Catholics under this ſanguinary prince being known to all people, I omit them here to avoid being tedious. After that he ſpeaks of two ſolemn viſitations; one made by the king's vicar general Cromwell, the other by the archbiſhop Cranmer; of which he writes thus:

" Cranmer likewiſe made his archiepiſcopal viſita-
" tion; but it was by the king's ſpecial licence. And
" then it was that biſhops began to exerciſe all acts of
" epiſcopal juriſdiction by virtue of the royal mandates.
" The principal end of that viſitation and other tranſ-
" actions of thoſe times was the firm eſtabliſhment of
" the king's ſupremacy, which affair our complaiſant
" archbiſhop took moſt ſeriouſly to heart; and the
" very firſt act of juriſdiction exerciſed by the biſhop
" of the firſt ſee of England was, to enſlave the church,
" together with the divine right of epiſcopacy, to the
" arbitrary will of a temporal prince.

" Theſe viſitations were followed by the ſuppreſſion
" of religious houſes, the revenues whereof were ap-
" propriated to the crown. Proteſtant as well as Ca-
" tholic countries cried out ſhame againſt this ſacri-
" legious pillaging of the places conſecrated to the ſer-
" vice of God. But the very infancy of the Engliſh
" reformation, beſides its other ſtains of luxury and
" revenge, was to be diſhonoured over and above by
" an avarice of the blackeſt kind. For this was one
" of the moſt early fruits of king Henry's ſupremacy;
" who ſeems to have made himſelf head of the church
" for no other end than to have a title to plunder it.

" Soon

" Soon after this queen Catharine died; illuſtrious " for her piety, as Mr. Burnet owns. Her character " was indeed very different from that of Anne Bolen; " allowing even that this unfortunate perſon was inno- " cent of the crimes laid to her charge before her " death. Mr. Burnet himſelf does not deny but that " her gaiety exceeded ſometimes the bounds of mo- " deſty; that ſhe was indiſcreet in her liberties, and ir- " regular in her conduct. If we go to the bottom " of this whole affair, we muſt acknowledge the hand " of God appeared viſibly in it. She enjoyed no longer " than three years the grandeur, to which infinite con- " fuſions and troubles had raiſed her. A new love " became the occaſion of her fall, as it had been of " her elevation; and the inconſtant Henry, who had " made a ſacrifice of queen Catharine to her, ſoon af- " ter ſacrificed her alſo to the youth and charms of " Jane Seymour. But with this difference, that Catha- " rine, though ſhe loſt the king's affection, preſerved " his eſteem to the laſt; whereas he condemned Anne " Bolen as an infamous woman, to loſe her head on a " ſcaffold.

" But ſee here another viſible mark of the hand of " God upon her. Henry, always a ſlave to the amours " that poſſeſſed him laſt, cauſed his marriage with " Anne Bolen to be declared null in favour of Jane Sey- " mour, as he had before diſſolved his marriage with " queen Catharine in favour of Anne Bolen; whoſe " daughter Elizabeth was alſo ſolemnly baſtardized, " as Mary the daughter of Catharine had been before " her. So that by a juſt judgment of God, ſhe fell into " the ſame pit, as ſhe had digged for her innocent rival. " But Catharine maintained to her death the dignity of " her royal character, the validity of her marriage, " and legitimacy of her daughter Mary; whereas " Anne through a baſe complaiſance owned contrary to " the real truth, that when ſhe was married to king " Henry, ſhe was precontracted to the lord Percy then " alive; and ſo by acknowledging againſt her con- " ſcience, that her marriage with king Henry was void, " involved her daughter Elizabeth in the ſame diſgrace

" with

" with herſelf But, that the juſtice of God might ap-
" pear more viſibly in the whole courſe of this memo-
" rable event, Cranmer, that very Cranmer, I ſay,
" who had diſſolved the marriage of queen Catharine,
" diſſolved likewiſe that of queen Anne, to whom he
" had the greateſt obligations. Thus God ſtruck with
" blindneſs all the chief authors of the divorce;
" Henry, Anne, and the archbiſhop himſelf; not one
" of them eſcaped. But this ſhameful weakneſs of
" Cranmer, and his extreme ingratitude toAnne, raiſed
" the indignation of all good men againſt him; and his
" baſe complaiſance in diſſolving marriages at the
" king's pleaſure deprived his firſt ſentence of divorce
" even of that ſmall weight of authority, which his
" archiepiſcopal character had given to it.

" Mr. Burnet is under ſome confuſion to ſee ſo
" black a ſtain in the life of his great reformer, and
" endeavours to wipe it off by ſaying, that queen Anne
" had declared to Cranmer her antecedent marriage
" with lord Percy, which implied the nullity of that
" with king Henry. So that he was bound in con-
" ſcience to pronounce their marriage void. But who
" ſees not that this is a barefaced impoſition upon the
" public? For it was very well known in England,
" that her engagements with lord Percy never went be-
" yond the bare propoſal of a match between them;
" which is ſo far from making any other marriage void,
" that it does not even render it unlawful. Mr. Burnet
" denies none of theſe facts, and Cranmer, who was
" privy to all that had paſſed, could not be ignorant of
" them. Add to this, that lord Percy had declared
" upon oath, in the preſence of Cranmer and the arch-
" biſhop of York, that there never had been any con-
" tract or even promiſe of marriage between him and
" Anne Bolen. And to render this oath the more ſo-
" lemn, he received the ſacrament in the preſence of
" the chief of the king's council, with this imprecation
" upon himſelf, that he might receive it to his dam-
" nation, if any ſuch engagement had been between
" them.

" Now Cranmer, who had been a witneſs of this
" oath,

" oath, could not but be ſenſible that queen Anne's " declaration to the contrary was not a free act. For " when ſhe made it [if ſhe made it at all] ſhe was un- " der ſentence of condemnation, and as Mr. Burnet " obſerves, not yet recovered of the terror, which the " judgment of death pronounced upon her had ſeized " her with. Add to this, that the law had condemned " her to be burned, and the mitigation of the ſen- " tence depended wholly upon the king's mercy. " Cranmer therefore could not but reflect, that in theſe " circumſtances ſhe might eaſily be prevailed upon to " confeſs whatever was ſuggeſted to her, as a means " either to ſave her life, or at leaſt to obtain a mitiga- " tion of a ſentence pronounced upon her; and this " was a proper conjuncture for an archbiſhop to aſſiſt " with his advice an oppreſſed perſon; from whom a " diſturbance of mind on the one hand, and the " hopes of having ſome mercy ſhewn her on the other, " might eaſily extort a confeſſion contrary to truth " and conſcience.—But Cranmer could not practiſe " virtues he was a ſtranger to. Nay he had not cou- " rage enough to lay before the king the contradiction " there was in the two ſentences pronounced againſt " queen Anne: One of which condemned her to death " as an adultreſs, and the other declared ſhe had ne- " ver been his wife. Cranmer diſſembled this crying " injuſtice; and all he did in favour of that unhappy " princeſs, was to write a letter to the king, in which " he wiſhed ſhe were innocent; and ends with a poſt- " ſcript, in which he expreſſes his ſorrow, that the " crimes ſhe was accuſed of were proved againſt her, " as he had been informed. So afraid was he leſt " Henry ſhould ſuſpect, that he diſapproved of any " thing he did.———

" Anno 1539, came forth king Henry's ſix famous " articles of religion. In the firſt whereof the doc- " trine of tranſubſtantiation was eſtabliſhed. The ſe- " cond confirmed the lawfulneſs of lay communion in " one kind. The third obliged prieſts to live un- " married. The fourth commanded the obſervance of " religious vows. The fifth was concerning private

" Maſſes;

" Maſſes; and the ſixth ſet forth the neceſſity of au-
" ricular confeſſion. Theſe articles were publiſhed by
" the authority of king and parliament, and obſtinate
" offenders againſt them were to ſuffer death, and
" others impriſonment during the king's pleaſure.

" Whilſt Henry declared himſelf in this terrible
" manner againſt innovations in the ancient faith, the
" vicar general and the archbiſhop ſaw no other means
" left to advance their pretended reformation, than by
" inducing the king to marry ſome lady, who might
" both protect their perſons and promote their deſigns.
" For queen Jane died the year before in childbed of
" Edward; and Cromwell reflecting that women,
" whilſt they were miſtreſſes of the king's affection,
" had a great aſcendant over him, flattered himſelf,
" that the princeſs Anne of Cleves would be a perſon
" fit for his purpoſe, and ſo perſuaded the king to
" marry her. But it happened unluckily, that about
" the ſame time he fell in love with lady Catharine
" Howard, and ſo his marriage with the princeſs Anne
" was ſcarce accompliſhed, but he ſought to break it.
" Cromwell paid dear for the advice he had given, and
" met with his ruin, where he hoped to have found a
" protection. It was obſerved, that he favoured un-
" derhand the new-goſpellers and enemies of the ſix
" articles, which Henry maintained with much vi-
" gour. He had alſo dropped ſome words againſt the
" king on that occaſion, which were reported to him.
" For which reaſons he was, by the king's orders, at-
" tainted in parliament, and condemned for hereſy
" and high treaſon ———

" Cromwell being removed out of the way, there
" remained but one thing more to content the king,
" which was to get rid of an odious wife, by annul-
" ling his marriage with Anne of Cleves. The pre-
" tence indeed was very groſs. For all that was al-
" ledged to prove the nullity of it was, that ſhe had
" been precontracted to the marquis of Loraine whilſt
" they were both minors, though this contract had ne-
" ver been ratified after they were of age. It is plain

" that

" that this was inſufficient to diſſolve a marriage fully
" compleated. But Henry had a Cranmer ready to
" do the job, and ſupply all the deficiencies of ſolid
" reaſons. So he untied this matrimonial knot with
" the ſame dexterity, as he had done twice before.—
" Mr. Burnet, after having ſtrained hard to palliate the
" matter, is forced at length to own, that Cranmer
" ſuſpecting it was a formed deſign to ruin him at
" court, went along with the current. Such was the
" courage of this ſecond Athanaſius, ſuch the virtue
" of this ſecond Cyril.

" As ſoon as this unjuſt ſentence of divorce had
" paſſed the convocation, in which archbiſhop Cran-
" mer preſided, and was approved by the parliament;
" king Henry eſpouſed lady Catharine Howard,
" who, like Anne Bolen, was zealouſly addicted to the
" reformation. But a ſtrange fatality ſeemed to at-
" tend the abettors of it. Her ſcandalous conduct
" ſoon brought her to the block, and Henry's family
" was continually ſtained with infamy and blood.

" Soon after the biſhops drew up a profeſſion of
" faith, which was confirmed by the royal ſanction.
" ——All the articles controverted between us and the
" reformed churches, excepting that of the pope's ſu-
" premacy were decided in it. Yet Cranmer conformed
" to his fellow-biſhops in ſubſcribing to it. For
" though Mr. Burnet obſerves, that ſome of the articles
" paſſed againſt his advice, yet he joined with the reſt
" in giving his vote for them———The will and plea-
" ſure of his maſter was the ſupreme rule of his
" faith; and inſtead of the pope in conjunction with
" the church, the king alone was become infalli-
" ble.———

Here the biſhop of Meaux takes occaſion to ſpeak of Cranmer's extravagant doctrine touching church-government, taken from his own words in a writing of his quoted by Burnet. Wherein he maintains, that every king as ſuch is to be conſidered in a double capacity, equally belonging to him by divine right: To wit, as head of the church in ſpirituals, and as ſupreme governor of the ſtate in temporals. That as he has a great number of civil officers under him for the

government

government of the ſtate, ſo has he biſhops, curates, vicars, and prieſts, to ſerve under him in the management of eccleſiaſtical affairs. That he is the ſource and fountain, whence all ſpiritual as well as temporal juriſdiction flows as from its head; and that by conſequence all biſhops and paſtors are but his delegates or vicars, and bound to receive from him their powers to preach the word, and adminiſter the ſacraments.

This is Cranmer's monſtrous ſyſtem of church-government in the aboveſaid writing. It is true, that Burnet, who is here aſhamed of his Athanaſius, pretends that he afterwards retracted it, by ſubſcribing to a book writ in defence of the divine inſtitution of epiſcopacy: But the biſhop of Meaux obſerves very juſtly, that Cranmer's ſubſcriptions are not to be much depended upon; ſince, as we have already ſeen, he was ready to ſet his hand to any thing to ſerve a preſent turn. Beſides that, as my author obſerves, he confirmed his doctrine by his own practice, and bluſhed not, though firſt biſhop and primate of England, to receive a ſpecial licence from Edward VI. though but a child, to perform his archiepiſcopal functions in his own dioceſs: He likewiſe taught in expreſs terms, as Burnet atteſts, that the dogmatical deciſions of councils were of no force without the king's approbation.

"Thus the Engliſh reformation (ſays the biſhop of "Meaux) had its origine from the flatteries of this "archbiſhop, and the diſorders of king Henry. Mr. "Burnet takes a great deal of pains to heap examples "upon examples of vicious princes, whom God has "made uſe of to bring about great deſigns. And who "doubts it? But to paſs over the inſtances he produces, "wherein he mixes truth with falſhood, and the certain with what is uncertain; can he bring a ſingle "example to prove, that God intending to reveal to "men ſome important truth unknown before, has "choſen ſo wicked a prince as Henry, and ſo ſcandalous a biſhop as Cranmer, to be the immediate inſtruments of ſuch a mercy? If the Engliſh reformation "be a divine work, nothing is more divine in it, than "the king's eccleſiaſtical ſupremacy: Since it not only

"was

" was the firſt cauſe of a ſeparation from the church " of Rome, which, as Proteſtants generally maintain, " is a neceſſary condition, with which every good and " ſolid reformation ought to begin, but is to this day " the only point, in which they never varied ſince the " beginning of the ſchiſm. Now then it ſeems, for- " ſooth, that God choſe Henry as a proper perſon to " reveal this new article of faith to; yet at the ſame " time to make him an example of his ſevereſt judg- " ments: Not of that ſort, by which he overthrows " kingdoms, and brings monarchs to ſome tragical " end; but of that other ſort, by which he delivers " them up to their own paſſions, and the flatteries of " thoſe that are about them; and permits them to " run headlong into all the extravagances of a wilful " blindneſs."

After this the biſhop of Meaux takes occaſion to ſpeak of pope Julius's diſpenſation, and enlarge upon the arguments uſually alleged to vindicate the validity of it; which I omit, becauſe they differ nothing in ſubſtance from thoſe, which the reader will find in the beginning of the 3d dialogue. But what he adds concerning the opinions of foreign divines relating to that matter, is curious, and deſerves a place here. It is as follows:

" I muſt here do this juſtice to the German Proteſ- " tants, that king Henry could never prevail upon " them either to approve his ſecond marriage, or to " condemn pope Julius's diſpenſation. For when this " affair was propoſed in a ſolemn embaſſy ſent to the " confederated Proteſtant princes in Germany, Melanc- " thon delivered his opinion againſt it. We have dif- " fered (ſays he) in our judgment from the Engliſh " ambaſſadors: For it is our opinion, that the law " which prohibits a brother to marry a ſiſter-in-law, " may be diſpenſed with, though we believe it never " was abrogated. L. 4. Epiſtle 185. And again more " concisely thus: The ambaſſadors pretend, that the " prohibition of marrying a ſiſter-in-law is indiſpen- " ſable; and we on the contrary maintain, it may be " diſpenſed with. ibid. Epiſt. 183. This agreed ex-

" actly

" actly with what had been decided at Rome, and
" was the ground of pope Clement's definitive ſentence
" againſt the divorce.

" Bucer alſo was once of this opinion, and grounded
" it upon the ſame reaſon. Nay Mr. Burnet acquaints
" us, that according to this author, who was one of
" the reformers of the Engliſh church, the Levitical
" law could not be a moral or perpetual law, becauſe
" God himſelf had diſpenſed with it.

" Zuinglius and Calvin, with their followers, fa-
" voured king Henry; and it is probable the proſpect
" they had of eſtabliſhing their doctrine in this king-
" dom rendered them ſo complaiſant. But the Lu-
" therans gave not into it; though Mr. Burnet makes
" them appear to be inconſiſtent with themſelves.

" As to the opinion of foreign Catholics, Mr. Bur-
" net relates, that king Henry bribed two or three
" cardinals. If it were ſo, it is a ſign his cauſe was
" none of the beſt; ſince it ſtood in need of ſuch in-
" famous means to ſupport it. And as to Catholic
" doctors, whoſe numerous ſubſcriptions he makes a
" great boaſt of, what wonder is it, that in ſo corrupt
" an age, ſo powerful a prince as king Henry was,
" ſhould find many who were not proof againſt his
" importunities and bribes? Mr. Burnet pretends, that
" Fra-Paolo's and monſieur de Thou's teſtimonies are
" unexceptionable. Let him then hear what they ſay:
" Fra-Paolo tells us, that Henry having conſulted the
" Catholic divines in Italy, Germany and France,
" found ſome for, and others againſt him. That the
" major part of the Pariſian doctors were for him;
" that it was the opinion of many, that they had been
" prevailed upon rather by the king's money than by
" his reaſons. Monſieur de Thou ſays likewiſe, that
" Henry laboured to draw over to his ſide foreign di-
" vines, particularly thoſe of Paris; and that it was
" rumored about, that his money had prevailed with
" theſe to ſubſcribe to the divorce.

" I will not here poſitively determine, whether the
" concluſion of the faculty of Paris produced by Mr.
" Burnet be a forged piece or not; others will do it

" for

" for me. I will only ſay there are reaſons to ſuſpect it. " Firſt, becauſe the ſtile is very different from what " that faculty is wont to uſe. And 2dly, becauſe it is, " according to Mr. Burnet, dated July 2. An. 1530. " at the Mathurins. Whereas ſome years before that " the aſſemblies of the faculty were uſually held at " the Sorbon.

" In the notes of that famous lawyer Charles du " Molin, mention is made of a deliberation of the " doctors of Paris in favour of king Henry, June 1. " 1530. But he ſays their meeting was at the Sorbon. " Beſides that he lays very little ſtreſs upon the reſult " of that deliberation, wherein the king had a ſmall " majority of voices for him: Which no man (ſays " he) ought to be much ſurpriſed at, by reaſon of the " Engliſh angels of gold, which were diſtributed " about to ſecure thoſe voices. And he declares far- " ther, that he was aſſured of the truth of this fact " by the teſtimonies of the preſidents du Freſne and " Paliot———He concludes in the whole, that the " true and genuine ſenſe of the Sorbon, that is to ſay, " that which they had not been bribed into with mo- " ney, was againſt the divorce. But over and above " it is certain, that in the time of the deliberation, " Francis I. who was then a well-wiſher to king " Henry's cauſe, charged monſieur Liſet, the firſt pre- " ſident of the parliament of Paris, to make an intereſt " in the Sorbon for him; as appears from the original " letters kept to this day in the king's library; wherein " he gives an account of the diligence he had uſed. " ———Now it is plain, that ſuch unfair ways as theſe " of conſulting the opinions of divines, to wit, by in- " trigues, briberies, and the authority of two powerful " kings to over-awe their deliberations, were much " more proper to raiſe than lay ſcruples in king Henry's " mind. Neither were the methods uſed in other " univerſities leſs unfair. Mr. Burnet himſelf ſpeaks " of a letter writ by the king's agent at Rome; wherein " he tells him, that if he had but money enough, he " would engage all the divines in Italy to ſubſcribe to " the divorce.———

[It ſeems then he had tried the power of money, and we may preſume that many of the divines of Padua and Bolognia, had been convinced of the juſtice of king Henry's cauſe, by this compendious way of reaſoning].

" But pope Clement had proceeded upon more ſolid " grounds in his deciſion of the point in queſtion. It " appeared evident that the Levitical prohibition had " not the force of a natural and indiſpenſable law; " ſince God himſelf had ſet the example that it might " be diſpenſed with. Now pope Julius's diſpenſa- " tion being grounded upon this reaſon, had ſuch a " probable foundation, that the generality of German " Proteſtants themſelves judged it to be good and valid. " And though there might be a diverſity of opinions " about it, it was ſufficient that it appeared not mani- " feſtly contrary to the law of God, which all are " bound to obſerve. It was therefore one of thoſe " caſes, in which we are to have recourſe to the pru- " dential judgment and diſcretion of ſuperiors, " whereon they, who uſe no double dealing, may de- " pend with an entire repoſe of conſcience. Beſides " there was the ſtrongeſt preſumption poſſible, that had " it not been for Henry's violent paſſion he never would " have troubled the church with the ſhameful propo- " ſal of a divorce, after a marriage ſolemnly contrac- " ted, and continued for the ſpace of 20 years, with- " out the leaſt ſcruple of conſcience on either ſide. " Here lay the real ſtreſs of the cauſe. And, whe- " ther pope Clement was or was not miſtaken in his " politics, or whether he did or did not carry them " to greater lengths than he ought, the equitableneſs " of his deciſion in the bottom will bear teſtimony to " all future ages, that the church is incapable of flat- " tering the paſſions of princes, or approving their " ſcandalous proceedings."

After this the biſhop of Meaux enlarges upon ſome controverted points, which I omit as being foreign to my purpoſe. Then he gives the following ſhort account of king Henry's death.

" It

" It is reported that this unfortunate prince, ſome " time before his death, had a remorſe of the criminal " exceſſes he had committed, and ſent for ſome bi- " ſhops to aſk their advice concerning the proper means " to calm his conſcience. I will not aver it as a cer- " tain truth. But they who are always for diſcover- " ing in ſcandalous ſinners, and above all in kings, " ſuch ſharp remorſes, as appeared in Antiochus, do " not conſider the ſecret ways of God, nor reflect " upon the ſtupid inſenſibility, or falſe peace, which " he ſuffers his greateſt enemies to fall into. But be " that as it will, though king Henry had applied him- " ſelf to his biſhops for advice, what could be expected " from perſons who had enſlaved the church, and be- " trayed her faith? Whatever ſhew Henry ſhould have " made on that occaſion of deſiring ſincerely their ad- " vice, he could not reſtore them to the liberty, his " tyranny had robbed them of. For they would al- " ways have dreaded a relapſe into one of thoſe fits of " inconſtancy, which that prince was ſubject to. And " in reality he who had refuſed to hear the truth from " the mouth of the holy biſhop of Rocheſter and Sir " Thomas More, both whom he put to death for ſpeak- " ing it, deſerved not to hear it any more.

" In this condition he died; and it is no wonder, " that things grew ſtill worſe after his death. For " no part of a building can ſtand long, when its foun- " dations are ſpoiled. Edward VI. king Henry's only " ſon, ſucceeded him according to law; and being not " quite ten years old, the kingdom, according to his " father's ſettlement, was to have been governed by " the lords of the council. But Edward Seymour, the " king's uncle by the mother's ſide, aſſumed the chief " authority with the title of lord protector. This " perſon was a Zuinglian in his heart, and Cranmer " his confident; who then diſſembled his religion no " longer, but openly gave vent to all the poiſon, " which until then had lain concealed in his heart, " againſt the Catholic church.

" To prepare the way for their pretended reforma- " tion in the king's name, he was immediately de-

" clared, as his father had been before him, ſupreme
" head in ſpirituals, as well as in temporals, of the
" church of England. For from the time that Henry
" took upon him the ſpiritual ſupremacy, it became a
" maxim, that the king was pope in England. But
" greater prerogatives were beſtowed upon this new
" pope, than the popes of Rome had ever claimed. For
" the biſhops were obliged to receive new commiſſions
" from king Edward revocable at pleaſure, as Henry
" had before declared; and it was thought neceſſary
" for the advancement of the reformation, to ſubject
" the prelatic order to the yoke of an arbitrary power.
" The archbiſhop of Canterbury and primate of Eng-
" land led the way, and was the firſt that bent his neck
" under this ſhame-yoke; though ſome ſmall mitiga-
" tion was condeſcended to not long after, and the bi-
" ſhops were bound to take it as a favour, that the
" king vouchſafed to beſtow biſhopricks for life. But
" care was taken, as in Henry's reign, to ſpecify very
" plainly in the tenor of their commiſſions, according
" to Cranmer's ſyſtem, that all epiſcopal as well as ſe-
" cular power in the realm flowed from the king as
" from its ſource; that the exerciſe of their epiſcopal
" juriſdiction was precarious, and revocable at the
" king's pleaſure, by whom it was communicated to
" them. In a word, it was the king that gave them
" their faculties to ordain and depoſe prieſts; to uſe the
" power of the keys againſt ſcandalous perſons, and
" to perform all the duties of their paſtoral charge.
" ——Commiſſions for the conſecrating of biſhops
" were alſo iſſued out by the king, and directed to
" whom he pleaſed. So that according to this new-
" modeled hierarchy, as biſhops were not conſecrated
" but by the king's authority, ſo they could not ordain,
" but as commiſſioned and delegated by him. Nay
" the very form of conſecrating biſhops or prieſts was
" regulated by the parliament. Which alſo took upon
" itſelf to preſcribe the form of public prayers, and
" the manner of adminiſtring the ſacraments——
" All which encroachments upon the hierarchy were
" grounded upon the new article of faith the parlia-
" ment

" ment had coined, to wit, that all juriſdiction, eccle-
" ſiaſtical as well as ſecular, flowed from the royal au-
" thority as from its ſource and fountain.

" It is to no purpoſe here to lament the miſerable
" ſtate of the church in England brought under ſervi-
" tude, and ſhamefully degraded by her own miniſters.
" An impartial view of the facts ſuffices alone to ſhew
" the enormity of their proceedings. But not long af-
" ter the king declared, he intended a general viſita-
" tion, and forbad all the biſhops to exerciſe any eccle-
" ſiaſtical juriſdiction as long as that viſitation ſhould
" laſt. There was alſo an injunction put forth by the
" king, whereby he commanded himſelf to be prayed
" for in public ſervice as ſupreme head of the church
" of England; and the tranſgreſſors againſt it were
" liable to the penalties of ſuſpenſion, depoſition, and
" excommunication. Thus the whole paſtoral autho-
" rity together with the power of the keys was openly
" invaded by the king; and the moſt ſacred truſt of
" the ſanctuary wreſted out of the hands of the
" prieſtly order.

" I ſhall here ſtop a moment to take a view of the
" whole ground-work of the Engliſh reformation;
" that work of light, the plain hiſtory whereof is its
" beſt juſtification, according to Mr. Burnet. And in-
" deed no nation glories more than England in its hav-
" ing been reformed, as it pretends, by the moſt legal
" aſſemblies, and with the utmoſt order and regard to
" the canons. But to give ſome colour to this boaſt,
" it ought to be ſupported by this principle, that the
" clergy had at leaſt the principal part in the manage-
" ment of this eccleſiaſtical revolution: Whereas on
" the contrary from the time of Henry's aſſuming the
" ſupremacy, the clergy had no authority to inter-
" meddle in matters of religion, unleſs they had his
" orders for it. And the only remonſtrance they made
" againſt this hardſhip put upon them was, that it was
" an encroachment upon their privilege. As if med-
" dling with matters of religion were but a bare privi-
" lege, and not an eſſential prerogative of the eccle-
" ſiaſtical order.

" But was their condition any thing better under " king Edward? When as Mr. Burnet pretends, the " reformation was eſtabliſhed upon a more ſolid bot- " tom. Nothing leſs. For the convocation of the " clergy only begged of the parliament, that no ſtatute " might paſs concerning religion without their advice. " ——But it could not be obtained.—Soon after the " king's privy council reſolved to ſend viſitors into all " parts of the kingdom, furniſhed with eccleſiaſtical " conſtitutions and articles of faith,——and they were " not aſhamed to require of the biſhops an expreſs " declaration, that they would teach ſuch doctrines, " as ſhould from time to time be eſtabliſhed and ex- " plained by the king and clergy. But it is manifeſt, " the clergy was only mentioned for form-ſake, and " every thing was done by the king's authority.— " They went ſtill farther. For there came forth a " mandate forbidding all preaching without licence " either from the king, or his viſitors, or the arch- " biſhop, or the dioceſan.—But the year following " the biſhops had their powers of giving licences to " preach revoked, and it was limited to the king and " archbiſhop only. At laſt they carried things ſo " far, that having given the people to underſtand, that " the king had ſet perſons at work to take away all " ſubjects of controverſy, a general prohibition was " publiſhed of preaching in the interim in any aſſem- " blies whatſoever. Here then we ſee all preaching " ſuſpended throughout the kingdom; the biſhops " ſilenced by the king's orders, and the whole nation " left in ſuſpenſe, not knowing what faith would come " forth with the royal ſtamp upon it. An admonition " was tacked to it exhorting all perſons to receive with " ſubmiſſion the orders, that ſhould in a ſhort time be " ſent down to them. Thus was the Engliſh reforma- " tion eſtabliſhed; that work of light, the plain hiſ- " tory whereof, ſays Mr. Burnet, is its beſt juſtification.

" Theſe preparations being made, the Engliſh refor- " mation was ſet on foot by the duke of Somerſet and " Cranmer in the king's name, and began with pul- " ling down by the regal authority of the ſon, what

" the

" the regal authority of the father had ſet up before. " For the ſix famous articles which Henry VIII. had " eſtabliſhed, with the whole authority both of his " ſpiritual and temporal ſupremacy, were forthwith " aboliſhed; and in ſpight of all the precautions he " had taken, even in his laſt will, to preſerve thoſe " precious remains of the Catholic faith, and perhaps " with a deſign to have it re-eſtabliſhed in due time, " the Zuinglian doctrine, ſo much deteſted by that " prince, got the upper hand."

After this, the biſhop of Meaux ſpeaks of the coming over of Peter Martyr and Martin Bucer, two apoſtate monks, to aſſiſt in the work of the reformation. He alſo ſpeaks of the diſputes that were between them concerning the preſence of Chriſt's body and blood in the ſacrament; of the changes made in the liturgy; of what ancient ceremonies and cuſtoms were kept, and what rejected; and many other things which I omit, as having no relation to my principal deſign. But the reader muſt not forget, that all the abovementioned facts, how aſtoniſhing ſoever, are taken from Burnet's own hiſtory of the reformation; who notwithſtanding glories in the rapid ſucceſs it met with, as a kind of miracle. But let us hear the biſhop of Meaux's anſwer to this boaſt:

" Mr. Burnet (ſays he) has the boldneſs to regard " the ſudden progreſs of the reformation as a viſible " miracle, and teſtimony of the divine aſſiſtance. But " with what face can a man talk ſo, who has himſelf " diſcovered the true reaſons of that unhappy ſucceſs? In the firſt place a prince blinded with an " inordinate paſſion, and condemned by the pope, ſets " perſons at work to exaggerate certain particular " facts, ſome odious exactions, and abuſes condemned " by the church herſelf. The miniſters of the altar, " by reaſon of the ignorance of ſome, and ſcandals of " others, are every where declaimed againſt from the " pulpits, and repreſented under the moſt contemptible characters even upon the ſtage: Of the indignity whereof Mr. Burnet himſelf is ſenſible. And under the authority of an infant king and a protector

" poiſoned with Zuinglianiſm theſe ſatyrs and invec-
" tives were carried to a greater height; and the ig-
" norant populace being thus worked up into a hatred
" and contempt of their ſpiritual guides, ſwallowed
" down greedily any new doctrines."

[To ſay nothing of the violence that was uſed to drag both clergy and laity to a compliance againſt their conſcience, the grand ſecret to which the ſpeedy progreſs of the reformation was chiefly owing, conſiſted in making every thing ſmooth and eaſy, both as to faith and practice. Of which my author ſpeaks thus.]

" In the myſtery of the holy Euchariſt the ſenſes
" were flattered and delivered from their ſubjection to
" the obedience of faith. Prieſts were diſcharged
" from their celibacy, monks from their ſolemn vows,
" and all in general from the yoke of confeſſion:
" Which, though a wholeſome preſervative againſt
" vice, is a burden to nature. A more commodious
" morality was therefore preached up, which, as Mr.
" Burnet ſays, marked out a plain and eaſy way to
" Heaven. Now ſuch good-natured injunctions could
" not but meet with an eaſy compliance. So that of
" ſixteen thouſand eccleſiaſtics, twelve thouſand, if
" Mr. Burnet may be believed, renounced their celi-
" bacy in the ſhort reign of Edward VI. and all theſe
" rotten members of the church of Rome became good
" Proteſtants, by becoming unfaithful to their vows.

" It was thus the clergy was gained. As to the
" laity, the revenues and riches of the church laid
" open to rapine was become their bait. The plate
" belonging to churches filled the king's coffers. The
" ſhrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, with the ineſti-
" mable donations that had been made to it from all
" parts, produced immenſe ſums for the royal exche-
" quer; and this was enough to attaint that holy
" martyr: He was condemned to be pillaged, and
" the riches of his tomb was his greateſt crime. In
" a word, they judged it more expedient to plunder
" the church's patrimony, than apply it to the uſe in-
" tended by the founders. And is it then a wonder,
" that both the grandees, the clergy and people were ſo

" eaſily

" eaſily gained over to the reformation? Is it not ra-
" ther a viſible miracle, that there remained a ſparkle
" in Iſrael, and that other countries did not follow
" the example of England, Denmark, Sweden and
" Germany, which were all reformed by the ſame
" methods?

" But amidſt all theſe reformations there was one
" which made no progreſs, to wit, the reformation of
" manners. I have already taken notice of the decay
" of piety, which followed Luther's reformation in
" Germany. And, we need but read Mr. Burnet's hiſ-
" tory to be convinced that the Engliſh reformation
" produced the very ſame effects. Henry the 8th was
" the firſt, who undertook that work. And we have
" ſeen the extravagances he fell into, as ſoon as he com-
" menced reformer. The ambitious duke of Somer-
" ſet, who puſhed on the reformation, which Henry
" had begun, though he was but a ſubject, put himſelf
" upon the level with ſovereigns, and took the title
" of duke of Somerſet by the grace of God. This
" perſon amidſt the general confuſion England was in
" about matters of religion, and the city of London
" over and above with a raging plague, had his
" thoughts chiefly intent upon building a magnificent
" palace for himſelf. And what added to his guilt, the
" crime of ſacrilege, was, that he raiſed this vaſt
" ſtructure upon the ruins, and with the materials of
" three epiſcopal palaces and a pariſh-church, and the
" revenues extorted from ſeveral biſhops and chap-
" ters; none daring to oppoſe his will. It is true,
" he begged them of the king: But his abuſing in
" this manner the authority of a minor, and accuſ-
" toming his pupil to ſuch ſacrilegious donations,
" are circumſtances which aggravated his crime ſtill
" more.

" I paſs over his other miſdeeds, for which he was
" condemned by the parliament, firſt, to be deprived of
" the authority he had uſurped over the council, and
" then to loſe his head. Neither will I examine the
" reaſons he had to condemn the admiral his brother
" to the block. But was it not ſhameful to ſubject a

" perſon of that rank, and his own brother, to the " unjuſt law of being condemned, upon the bare al- " legations of witneſſes without being allowed to make " any defence? Yet by virtue of this law the admiral, " beſides many more, were attainted without being " heard, and the protector prevailed upon the king to " ſend down his orders to the commons to proceed " againſt him without ſuffering him to ſpeak for him- " ſelf. And thus it was he trained up his pupil to juſtice.

" Mr. Burnet takes here a great deal of pains to ex- " cuſe his Cranmer for ſigning the death of this un- " happy perſon, and meddling in a cauſe of blood con- " trary to the canons.——But he declines coming to " the main point: For if Cranmer was to be excuſed, " it ought not to have been barely for a violation of " the canons, which indeed as archbiſhop he was bound " above all others to have had a tender regard for, but " for having violated the law of nature ſacred even " amongſt pagans, of not condemning a perſon with- " out hearing his defence. But Cranmer in ſpite of " this law condemned the admiral, and ſigned the " death warrant for his execution. Ought not ſo emi- " nent a reformer as he was, to have ſtood up againſt " ſuch a barbarous practice? O! no; it was more ſuit- " able to his character to pull down altars, beat down " images, not ſparing thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, " and aboliſh the ſacrifice of the Maſs in England " which had been offered up by ſo many ſaints, from " the time that Chriſtianity had been eſtabliſhed " amongſt the Engliſh nation.

" To make an end of Cranmer's character, at the " death of king Edward he ſet his hand to his laſt " will, in which this young prince, out of hatred to " his ſiſter Mary, who was a Roman Catholic, changed " the order of ſucceſſion. Mr. Burnet will have it, " that the archbiſhop ſet his hand to it with great re- " luctance, and thinks it a ſufficient excuſe for this " great reformer, that he committed crimes with ſome " ſcruple. However, the council, of which he was " head, gave all orders neceſſary to arm the people " againſt queen Mary, and maintain the title of lady

" Jane

" Jane Grey. Preachers were employed for the ſame " purpoſe, and Ridley, biſhop of London, had or- " ders to beat the drum eccleſiaſtic in favour of her. " But when her affairs were become deſperate, Cran- " mer with the reſt of his aſſociates acknowledged " his crime, and threw himſelf upon the queen's " mercy.——

After this the biſhop of Meaux touches paſſingly upon queen Mary's reign, Cranmer's impriſonment and condemnation, his double abjuration of Lutheraniſm, whilſt in priſon, and his retractation of it at the ſtake, &c. and concludes with a parallel between him and St. Thomas of Canterbury.

" It is not to be wondered, (ſays he) that during the " life of an archbiſhop of Cranmer's character, there " was no regard for the doctrine of his holy predeceſ- " ſors, St. Dunſtan, St. Lanfrank, St. Anſelm, and ſuch " others, whoſe admirable virtues, and particularly " that of continency, were an honour to the church. " Neither do I wonder that in his time, St. Thomas of " Canterbury's name, whoſe life was a condemnation " of Thomas Cranmer, was ſtruck out of the calender " of ſaints. St. Thomas of Canterbury oppoſed the un- " juſt attempts of kings; but Thomas Cranmer proſti- " tuted his conſcience, and was a ſlave to their paſſions. " The one under baniſhment, the confiſcation of his " goods, and the moſt cruel perſecution of his friends " as well as of himſelf, purchaſed the glorious liberty " of ſpeaking the truth with a generous contempt of " all the conveniencies of life, and of life itſelf. " The other to pleaſe his prince, ſpent above thirteen " years of his life under a ſhameful diſſimulation, and " continual outward conformity to a religion, which " he condemned in his heart. The one maintained " with his blood the very ſmalleſt rights and immuni- " ties of the church, and defended the very outworks " of the holy city, by not only ſtanding up for thoſe " prerogatives, which had coſt the ſacred blood of " Jeſus Chriſt, but thoſe alſo which the pious liberality " of princes had beſtowed upon her. But the other

" gave up every thing belonging to her; her moſt ſa-
" cred truth, her doctrine, her worſhip, her ſacra-
" ments, her power of the keys, her diſcipline, her
" faith. All was brought under the yoke, and the
" whole hierarchy enſlaved to the crown.

" Laſtly, the one having been a man of courage and
" exemplary piety in the whole courſe of his life, was
" ſtill more remarkably ſo in his laſt moments;
" whereas the other always puſillanimous and fearful,
" never betrayed more weakneſs than at the approaches
" of death; and at the age of threeſcore and two ſa-
" crificed his religion and conſcience to the miſerable
" remnants of a ſhort life. In effect, he has left an
" odious name behind him, and his own party cannot
" cover the ſtains of his life, but with artificial and
" ſtudied gloſſes, to which plain facts give the lie.
" But the memory of St. Thomas of Canterbury will
" be venerable in all ages; and his virtues, which Eng-
" land and France have honoured with a kind of emu-
" lation, will never be forgot. Nay the more doubt-
" ful the cauſe of that holy martyr appeared to the po-
" litic world, the more the divine power declared
" itſelf in favour of him, by the remarkable chaſtiſe-
" ments of Henry the 2d. his perſecutor; the exem-
" plary penance that prince performed to appeaſe
" God's wrath, and ſuch illuſtrious miracles wrought
" at his tomb, as drew to it the kings of France as well
" as England. Miracles, I ſay, ſo frequent, and ſo
" unanimouſly atteſted by hiſtorians of thoſe times,
" that to queſtion the truth of them is to turn all hiſ-
" tory into ſcepticiſm."

I omit the reſt. For the pieces I have here tranſlated will ſuffice to anſwer the end I propoſe to myſelf in this preface, which is to convince the reader, that the hiſtorical account he will find in my third dialogue is entirely free from miſrepreſentation or exaggeration. Whether we conſider the facts I have related, or the reflections I have made upon them; or finally the characters I have given of the chief authors of the changes made in the religion of our anceſtors during

during the reigns of Henry VIII. and his ſucceſſor Edward VI.

As to queen Elizabeth's reformation, my author gives a very ſhort relation of it in his 10th book. Where, after having ſet forth the extreme abſurdity of conſtituting a woman ſupreme head of the church of England in ſpirituals, his chief buſineſs is to ſhew the variations of this laſt royal reformer from her reforming predeceſſor, in the ſeveral corrections and alterations made by her in her brother Edward's reformation.

But ſince I have been under a kind of neceſſity of relating ſeveral ſevere truths of, and making ſome harſh reflections upon this princeſs, which will not be well reliſhed by thoſe who have been brought up with the higheſt ideas of her eminent virtues and religious zeal, unleſs their palates be prepared and ſeaſoned againſt the pre-poſſeſſions of their education; I ſhall here for the ſake of theſe (if my book ſhould happen to fall into any of their hands) tranſcribe her character, as it is drawn by the impartial and unſuſpected hand of a profeſſed member of the church of England as eſtabliſhed by law. The perſon I mean is the ingenious author of the ſhort view of the Engliſh hiſtory, who writes thus of queen Elizabeth:

"This princeſs reverſed all her ſiſter had done in "favour of the Roman Catholic religion, which ſhe "aboliſhed, and reſtored the reformed.——The firſt "ſtep was to order, that the ſervice of the church "ſhould be read in the vulgar tongue. After which "ſhe aboliſhed the ſupremacy, and aſſumed that title "to herſelf. Which at firſt ſeemed a jeſt to the reſt "of the world, by reaſon of the incapacity of her "ſex for the miniſterial functions.

Here the author touches briefly upon the reaſons that moved queen Elizabeth to reject the ſeveral matches propoſed to her; and then proceeds to a relation, how the troubles of Scotland were fomented by her.

"The firſt occaſion of drawing her ſword were the "troubles of Scotland, in which occaſion the meaſures "ſhe took did not ſo much redound to her intereſt and "advantage, as they were deſtructive to her honour

"and

" and conſcience. For how far one prince may aſſiſt " the rebels of another in time of actual war, I leave " to civilians and caſuiſts to decide. But to raiſe and " encourage ſedition among the ſubjects of another " prince, with whom there is outwardly a good un- " derſtanding, is certainly a violation of the laws of " nations, and all that is ſacred between man and " man. The tumults in Scotland about religion, ſo " ſcandalous to the reformation, gave an opportunity " to queen Elizabeth to foment a faction againſt the " queen of Scots; of whoſe title to the crown of Eng- " land ſhe was ſo jealous. For if the marriage be- " tween her father and Anne Bolen was not lawful, " Mary of Scotland had undoubtedly a certain right, " to which ſhe inopportunely laid claim upon her " marriage with Francis the 2d by quartering the " arms of England: But though this imprudent con- " duct in the queen of Scots might juſtly irritate and " diſguſt Elizabeth, yet ſhe had reaſon afterward to " be ſatisfied, when, upon a treaty between them, the " Scotiſh queen renounced all claim and pretence to " the crown of England during the life of queen Eli- " zabeth. This was a greater confirmation of her ti- " tle, than if it had never been diſputed before; " though at the ſame time ſhe refuſed to ratify the " treaty of Edinburgh, in which there were ſome " clauſes relating to the ſubjects of Scotland, in which " Elizabeth without any juſt reaſon would intermeddle.

" The queen of Scots upon this refuſal was denied " leave to paſs through England [after the death of " her huſband Francis the 2d] to her own kingdom. " But what was more ungenerous than this denial, a " fleet was ſent to intercept her in her paſſage by ſea. " But notwithſtanding all the vigilance of the Engliſh, " in a great fog ſhe went by their fleet undeſcried, " and arrived ſafely in Scotland, where we cannot " chooſe but pity this poor princeſs, who was now " obliged to live among ſuch lamentable creatures as " the Scottiſh fanatics, after having been bred in the " politeſt court of the univerſe. She had not been long " at home, when the ambition of her baſtard brother

" the

" the earl of Murray, on whom ſhe herſelf had conferred that title, began by his artifices to lay the foundations of thoſe evils, which involved this poor princeſs in great troubles the reſt of her life, and at laſt terminated in her final deſtruction. All which misfortunes were immediately owing to the unjuſt politics of queen Elizabeth, who always underhand and ſometimes publicly abetted the rebellion of Mary's ſubjects, even when ſhe moſt pretended to be her friend and to ſupport her cauſe, until ſhe had reduced this unfortunate queen to a neceſſity of demanding that protection, which ſhe had not the generoſity to give her.

" For the queen of Scots, after a treatment in her own country, which filled the reſt of mankind with horror, thought ſhe could fly no where ſo properly for refuge as to her ſiſter of England, whom honour, conſcience, good nature, and nearneſs of blood obliged to protect her. But the unhappy queen was miſtaken; ſhe had only now eſcaped from her own barbarous ſubjects to fall into more cruel and inhoſpitable hands. The ill uſage of this princeſs, in both kingdoms, muſt give the reſt of the world a ſtrange idea of our barbarity; it being impoſſible ſuch beauty and majeſty in diſtreſs could want protection in any country, where the men were ſuſceptible of love, honour or pity.

" Mary was no ſooner arrived in England, but ſhe ſent a letter to Elizabeth, in which ſhe gave her an account of her circumſtances, and begged her protection, deſiring at the ſame time to be admitted to her preſence, that ſhe might have an opportunity to clear herſelf from the ſlanderous aſperſions with which her enemies had loaded her: Of theſe the chief was Knox and Buchanan; the firſt of whom was a turbulent preacher and mutinous enthuſiaſt; the other would have been the greateſt writer among the moderns, if his ſincerity, the moſt neceſſary quality in a hiſtorian, had been equal to his genius and capacity. But notwithſtanding he had ſo much endeavoured to blacken the character of his

" miſtreſs,

" miſtreſs, by the moſt impudent falſehoods, that " diſingenuity and malice could invent, when he came " to die, which is a time if ever, one may venture to " believe even a Scottiſh fanatic, he recanted all that " he had ſaid derogatory to the honour of that injured " queen.

" This requeſt, though ſo reaſonable, Elizabeth " thought fit to deny; but the true reaſon was the " envy ſhe bore to the beauty of Mary, to whom ſhe " was unwilling to be a foil by being ſeen at the ſame " time: The deſire of being admired, as it is the " moſt common paſſion in the fair ſex, ſo it was the " moſt deeply rooted in Elizabeth, which vanity was " ſupported by the inſincerity of her looking-glaſſes. " But notwithſtanding the good opinion Elizabeth had " of herſelf, the queen of Scots was too unconteſtable " a rival for ſuch a diſpute; being as much above her " in the empire of beauty, as below her in that of for- " tune. To theſe charms of her perſon, and the na- " tural vivacity of her wit, ſhe had added the orna- " ment of letters, and a great knowledge in books " and foreign languages, being miſtreſs not only of " the living but the dead *; with all other qualifica- " tions not only uncommon to her ſex, but even ad- " mired in men, who make thoſe accompliſhments " their only buſineſs. Theſe diſtinguiſhing charms " were none of the leaſt cauſes of Mary's misfortunes, " by making ill blood in the heart of Elizabeth to- " wards her.

" The queen of Scots unable to get admittance, now " plainly ſaw what ſhe muſt expect at the hands of a " cunning and jealous woman, who had given her ci- " vil invitations, and ſo many promiſes of protection, " only to draw her within her power. But though the " world was generally ſo abandoned at this time, there " were ſome few of the Engliſh who had compaſſion " for diſtreſſed innocence; among the nobility the " chief were the duke of Norfolk, one of the moſt con- " ſiderable ſubjects of Europe at this time, the earl of " Suſſex, and Leiceſter himſelf, who, though one of " the

* i. e. Latin and Greek.

" the worſt of men, pretended at leaſt to be aſhamed " of this infamous conduct. But the generoſity of the " duke had the more fatal conſequences on the life " and fortune of that worthy nobleman, who impoſed " on by the craft and cunning of Leiceſter, was drawn " into a deſign of marriage with the queen of Scots: " Murray himſelf had firſt propoſed this match to the " duke, with a deſign to finiſh the ruin of the queen " his miſtreſs, with Elizabeth, whoſe jealous nature " he knew would entertain the greateſt apprehenſion " of ſuch an alliance. This affair was carried on by " ſecret intrigues, and ſeveral love letters to queen " Mary, all which were conſtantly intercepted, and " came to the hands of queen Elizabeth.

" Though the duke might be hurried by his paſ- " ſions of love and ambition to purſue this match with " ſome warmth, however he never deſigned to accom- " pliſh that affair without the queen's knowledge, and " leave firſt obtained: In order to which he deſired " Leiceſter to procure her conſent, which he promiſed " to do, though he never deſigned to ſerve the duke; " for he daily deceived him, by pretending a want of " opportunity; upon which the duke of Norfolk re- " ſolved to ſpeak himſelf, but was prevented by the " freſh aſſurances that Leiceſter gave him of perform- " ing his promiſes immediately. But Leiceſter, in- " ſtead of managing this affair with ſincerity, when he " ſaw a proper juncture of ill circumſtances for the " duke, finiſhed his ruin. For obſerving the queen " grown daily more jealous of the duke's deſigned " marriage which was no ſecret to her, and at the " ſame time alarmed with the noiſe of a rebellion in " the north, he thought this the moſt proper time to " make his villainous deſigns ſucceed, when the " queen's fears thus heightened made her the more " ſuſceptible of any impreſſions. To this purpoſe the " perfidious Leiceſter counterfeits himſelf ſick, and " pretends to be in the laſt danger. Upon which the " queen who had always a great affection for him, " came to make him a viſit; when being alone toge- " ther, Leiceſter, after ſeveral grimaces and counter-

" feited

" feited ſighs on pretence of diſcharging his conſci-
" ence, ſets forth the dangerous conſequences of this
" courtſhip between the duke of Norfolk and the
" queen of Scots; not letting Elizabeth know that he
" had been commiſſioned by the duke to aſk her con-
" ſent, but made as if this diſcovery had merely pro-
" ceeded from a ſenſe of her danger, and his own com-
" punction and penitence.

" This trick had its deſigned ſucceſs. Elizabeth
" with all the fear and jealouſy of her ſex, ſwallows
" the bait, and ſends the duke to the tower, ſoon after
" which he was condemned and executed.

" This example of perfidy will give the world a
" character of Leiceſter, who had all the ambition and
" ill principles of his father Northumberland; for
" he broke the neck of his wife down ſtairs to make
" room in his bed, when he ſhould have the happi-
" neſs to accompliſh his deſigns on queen Elizabeth;
" the hopes of which had made him obſtruct the
" match underhand, which Elizabeth had propoſed
" between the queen of Scots and himſelf; who pre-
" ferred the happy grandeur of his own plain miſtreſs
" to the unfortunate beauty of the moſt charming
" woman then alive. But Leiceſter was not alone in
" this court, which had the moſt wicked miniſtry that
" ever was known in any reign.

" After this queen Elizabeth began to exerciſe great
" ſeverity on the Engliſh Roman Catholics, to which
" ſhe was inſtigated by Leiceſter, Walſingham, and
" others; who having already taſted the ſweetneſs of
" confiſcation, deſigned to make that party deſperate
" by ill uſage, in hopes they would rebel, and forfeit
" their eſtates. But when truth enough could not be
" found againſt them, Walſingham by counterfeit letters
" and confeſſions extorted by the pains and terrors of the
" rack, tumultuated the people with chimerical dan-
" gers only to prepare them for the intended murder of
" the queen of Scotland; in whoſe behalf the remon-
" ſtrances from the ſeveral courts of Europe, joined
" to the condeſcenſions of this poor princeſs, who
" offered to ſign a chart blanche, and ratify whatever
" ſhould

" ſhould be demanded, were all to no purpoſe. Nor
" was there indeed any juſt ground to hope for her
" liberty, after the meaſures that queen Elizabeth
" had lately taken, by which ſhe convinced the world
" of her ill intentions to Mary, by ſuppreſſing the
" ſmall remnant of a party, who adhered to her in
" Scotland; for ſhe aſſiſted Morton with men and can-
" non in the reduction of Edinburgh caſtle, which
" was defended by ſome gallant men, who in ſo gene-
" ral a corruption retained a ſenſe of their honour
" and duty. Theſe brave men compelled to ſurren-
" der were ſacrificed to the revenge of Morton, who
" was made regent by the intereſt and power of Eli-
" zabeth; notwithſtanding the whole world knew
" how great a hand that nobleman had in the aſſaſ-
" ſination of the late king; nor was ſhe leſs concerned
" to ſave his life, when by the divine juſtice he was
" afterwards brought to condign puniſhment for that
" horrid murder which he owned at his death: The
" forward appearance of queen Elizabeth in behalf
" of a man condemned for ſo flagitious a crime, gave
" her enemies an occaſion to affirm, that ſhe was not
" unacquainted with the deſign of that murder: But
" however ſhe made herſelf a party, and contracted
" a ſhare of the guilt in ſupporting the known aſſaſ-
" ſins to the very laſt; but we ſhall have the leſs rea-
" ſon bye and bye to wonder at any thing ſhe did to
" Darnley, when we ſee what an octrage will be com-
" mitted on the perſon of his unfortunate widow,
" whoſe cataſtrophe now approached.

" The emiſſaries and creatures of Walſingham, who
" was the moſt deeply dipped in the blood of this prin-
" ceſs, had inveigled ſeveral Catholics and others into
" a deſign of reſcuing the queen of Scots by force of
" arms: For this Babington and others were executed.
" The people frightened and alarmed with this con-
" ſpiracy, they thought it a proper time to bring on the
" tragedy, which they had been ſo long preparing:
" At firſt they were at a loſs on what ſtatute to indict
" her; that of the 25th of Edward the IIId. not lay-
" ing hold of her cauſe, they reſolved to proceed on a

" ſtatute

" ſtatute made in this reign ſometime before for this " very purpoſe. But the queen of Scots aſſerting her " ſovereignty and independence, refuſed to acknow- " ledge the authority of any earthly court, until " threatened to be condemned for contumacy, after " having in vain requeſted to be heard before the " queen in parliament, ſhe ſubmitted to her trial; at " which time ſhe confeſſed, that through deſpair of " her liberty, ſhe had endeavoured to make her eſ- " cape; in which ſhe thought herſelf juſtified by the " laws of nature and ſelf-preſervation. But as to any " deſign againſt the perſon or authority of the queen, " with the moſt ſolemn aſſeverations ſhe declared her " innocence. Nevertheleſs the barbarous delegates " proceeded to the infamous ſentence, and that the " whole nation might ſhare the guilt, it was contrived " afterward, that the parliament ſhould ſolicit the " queen of Scot's death, which Elizabeth was to refuſe " ſeveral times; until at laſt ſhe ſhould ſeem to com- " ply, as if tired with the repeated remonſtrances of " her people. The houſe of lords particularly diſtin- " guiſhed themſelves in this affair, by an addreſs againſt " the queen of Scots, worded in a very ridiculous cant, " ſetting forth the judgments of God on Saul for ſpar- " ing the life of Agag, and on Achab for Benhadad. " Thus were the ſcriptures perverted to deſtroy an in- " nocent woman. This odd petition, much fitter for " tub-preachers than cavaliers and men of honour, " muſt give us a ſtrange idea of the nobility at this " time.

" Now followed the ſecond act of hypocriſy in queen " Elizabeth, through a ſhame to juſtify what ſhe had " ſo little conſcience as to command. The queen of " Scots muſt be executed without her knowledge: But " the perſon muſt be very ignorant of the world, who " could be impoſed on by ſuch a ſhift. Every body, " who is acquainted with the government and conſti- " tution of England, knows that the privy council, " and the miniſters of the law, durſt not proceed in " an affair of that nature, eſpecially in ſo unprece- " dented a caſe, without the authority of the ſove-

" reign

" reign power. But ſuppoſing a poſſibility of that " extraordinary conduct in the privy council, it is " unconceivable that no body in the mean while ſhould " acquaint the queen with what was tranſacted, who " had time enough to have countermanded the order " for the execution, if ſhe had inclined to mercy. " However Daviſon the ſecretary (to blind the world " was ſentenced in the ſtar-chamber to pay ten thou- " ſand pounds fine, and to ſuffer impriſonment during " the queen's pleaſure: But underhand the fine was " remitted, and he privately rewarded; though at his " trial he made it appear in his own defence, notwith- " ſtanding he was as tender as he could be of the " queen's honour, that he had acted nothing in this " affair, but for what he had plain inſinuations of her " pleaſure, though not poſitive and direct commands. " So that the whole juggle is plain by Daviſon's own " vindication, who was brought into the office merely " to ſerve this turn.

" It is reported that Leiceſter, who though he had " no more conſcience than the reſt, was a man of better " ſenſe, came to the queen, and conjured her not to " commit ſo infamous an action, which would ſtrike at " herſelf, and affront the common majeſty of crowned " heads. Upon which the queen aſked him, what ſhe " ſhould do in this caſe? Madam (replyed Leiceſter) " ſend an apothecary and not a hangman. If ſhe muſt " die, let it be done with decency. Prudence would " certainly have rather followed this advice; for if ſhe " had authority to put her to death, the manner, as to " the conſcientious part, was a thing indifferent. This " would have prevented the ill conſequences of ſo dan- " gerous a precedent; which as England only could " give, ſo the horrid example could be followed in no " other country beyond the bounds of that unfortu- " nate iſland. For when it was debated among the " regicides, what they ſhould do with the perſon of " this queen's grandſon, Charles the firſt, Harry " Martin propoſed to ſerve him, as they had his Scot- " tiſh grandmother before.

" The

" The manner of this queen's death, her reſigna-
" tion to the will of God, her greatneſs of ſpirit,
" which ſeemed ſupported by ſome other power, than
" the common aſſiſtance of natural courage, have re-
" commended her name to the veneration of future
" ages, and covered the authors of this barbarous cru-
" elty with indeliable infamy and reproach. The per-
" ſons who were commiſſioned to ſee the execution
" performed, were the earls of Shrewſbbury, Kent,
" Derby, and Cumberland; one of whom had ſo di-
" veſted himſelf of common humanity, as to toſs up his
" cap, and huzza at the cutting off the moſt charming
" head that ever wore a crown. But this was not the
" only circumſtance of barbarity ſhewn to this princeſs,
" they carried their cruelty to ſuch a degree, as to
" deny her the aſſiſtance of her ghoſtly father in her
" laſt agony; a favour not refuſed by Chriſtian charity
" to the moſt common malefactor. But they reſolved
" to be all of a piece, and ſhew no more mercy to her
" ſoul than to her body.

" Such was the deplorable fate of Mary, ſovereign
" queen of Scotland, and dowager of Fance, in a
" country, whither ſhe was invited by the moſt ſolemn
" aſſurances of protection, honour and ſafety; all
" which were violated, firſt by an impriſonment of
" nineteen years, and afterwards by an infamous death.
" This unparalleled action juſtly filled with horror and
" reſentment all the other princes in Europe, who had
" in vain ſolicited her cauſe."

Here we have the character of a crafty jealous woman, perfidious in her nature, cruel in her temper, verſed in the art of hypocriſy, and governed by miniſters of the corrupteſt morals in the moſt weighty concerns both of church and ſtate. Good God! what a character is this of a capital reformer, the foundreſs of a church, and one choſen by God to reſtore religion to its ancient purity! but I leave the world now to judge, whether Burnet was not under a kind of delirium, and without thought or reflection, when he made this ridiculous boaſt; to wit, that a plain hiſtory of the

reformation

reformation is its beſt juſtification? For the obvious and natural meaning of this is, that all the moſt conſiderable facts relating to it, the authors and inſtruments of it, the motives upon which it was begun and carried on, and the methods by which it was eſtabliſhed, were ſuch, as redound manifeſtly to the honour and credit of it, and may ſuffice to convince an unbiaſſed judgment, that the Holy Ghoſt was the principal author, manager, and director of it. Whereas on the contrary, the very facts related by Burnet himſelf, though ever ſo artfully diſguiſed and varniſhed over by that unfaithful writer, are in themſelves ſo ſcandalous, as ſuffice alone to caſt the blackeſt ſtains upon any religious cauſe. And what is moſt remarkable, We have not found one perſon of note concerned in the promoting his ſo much boaſted work of light, whoſe character would not at any time be reckoned a ſcandal even to a cauſe of far leſs moment, than that of reforming the faith and diſcipline of a whole national church, on which the ſalvation or damnation of millions of ſouls muſt unavoidably depend. So that I dare boldly aſſert, that the very reverſe of Burnet's boaſt approaches much nearer to truth; to wit, that a plain hiſtory of the reformation is its beſt confutation. I flatter myſelf it will appear ſo to all ſuch, as ſhall read my laſt two dialogues with an unprejudiced mind.

THE

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☞ *The reader is to obſerve, that the capitals* A. G. *ſignify in this work,* Almighty God.

THE

THE FIRST DIALOGUE, CONTAINING THE GENERAL GROUNDS OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

SECT. I.

The obligation of ſubmitting our private Judgment does not exclude Examination.

GENTLEMAN.

I FIND, Sir, I am like to be a conſiderable loſer in this world by the religion I have been educated in. It behoves me therefore not to ſit down with a ſuperficial knowledge of it, but to ſearch diligently into the very bottom of the cauſe: That I may not fall juſtly under the reproach of ſuffering like a fool, for I know not what.

PRECEPTOR. What you ſay, Sir, is perfectly conſonant to reaſon. Nay, St. Peter exhorts all Chriſtians, *to be always ready to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh us an account of the hope that is in us.* 1. Pet. 3. v. 15. And can any man give an account of the hope (or faith) that is in him, without a due examination of the grounds or motives that induce him to it? No ſurely. And therefore, nothing ought to hinder you from examining thoroughly the grounds of your religion.

Nay I exhort you to examine them over and over again, till you have a full conviction of conſcience, that it is not education, but the prevailing force of truth, that determines you in the choice of it.

G. I own, Sir, I am charmed to hear you ſay ſo. But I have ſome difficulty to reconcile this with what you have often repeated to me, to wit, that we are bound to captivate our underſtanding unto the obedience of faith, and pay an entire ſubmiſſion to the deciſions of the Catholic church. Now I cannot well conceive how ſubmitting and examining can be joined together: which therefore I deſire you to explain to me, that I may be furniſhed with a ſatisfactory anſwer to thoſe, who are continually reproaching us, that we are kept in the dark by our politick guides, and bid to ſhut our eyes againſt the light of reaſon, leſt it ſhould diſcover to us the follies and errors of our religion.

P. This, Sir, is not the only thing Proteſtants wrong us in. Nor do I wonder at it. For miſrepreſentation is the eaſieſt way of confuting, and has always been found to be of exquiſite uſe in maintaining a bad cauſe. But let that paſs, to come directly to the point we have before us. You ſay, you cannot well conceive how ſubmitting and examining can be joined together. Yet nothing will appear more eaſy, ſuppoſing only ſome general principles agreed to without contradiction by Proteſtants as well as by Catholics.

1. That there is ſuch a thing as a revealed religion, which no acuteneſs of wit, or ſtrength of human reaſon could ever have diſcovered; nor can comprehend now it is diſcovered to us.

2. That whatever God reveals, is moſt infallibly true; though it be ever ſo ſeemingly contrary to human reaſon.

3. That

3. That there is a wide difference between a thing being above reaſon, and being againſt it.

4. That truth hath always reaſon on its ſide.

From the two firſt of theſe principles, which are unqueſtionable, it follows, that captivating our underſtanding, or ſubmitting our private judgment to all ſuch revealed truths, as are above our reaſon, is an indiſpenſable duty. And from the two latter it follows, that this ſubmiſſion is perfectly reaſonable: and if it be reaſonable, it muſt be grounded upon ſolid motives; and theſe motives cannot affect us, or have an influence upon our faith, unleſs they be known and examined.

Firſt then as to the obligation of ſubmitting, it is manifeſt that amongſt the revealed truths of the Chriſtian religion there are myſteries ſo ſublime, as to be above all human underſtanding. Such as the Bleſſed Trinity, the incarnation and death of the Son of God, the propagation of original ſin, &c. and in reference to theſe and ſuch others, reaſon can have no other part to act than that of an entire ſubmiſſion, whenever the revelation of them is declared to us by that authority, which Chriſt has appointed to be our guide. For ſurely whoever gives his interior aſſent to any thing above his underſtanding, is properly ſaid to ſubmit his judgment to it: and this is all the ſubmiſſion we require of the members of our church; which if it be not reaſonable, merely becauſe the myſteries, they ſubmit or aſſent to, are above the reach of their underſtanding, we muſt even join with Atheiſts and Deiſts, and renounce all revealed Religion.

G. Sir, notwithſtanding all this Proteſtants inſult over us, and ſay our faith is wholly implicit. That according to the doctrine of our leaders we never ſee better than when we ſhut our eyes, and act the moſt reaſonably, when we ſuffer our rea-

ſon to be hoodwinked. In a word, that when our Romiſh guides are put to a nonplus, and have nothing to ſay for themſelves, their laſt ſhift is to have recourſe to the doctrine of ſubmiſſion; which, as they ſay, is but in effect a ſofter term for blind obedience, and a mere cloak to cover any abſurdity, they have a mind to impoſe upon the credulity of the people.

P. It ſeems then that St. Paul was a rank impoſtor, when he wrote thus to the Hebrews. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: for they watch over your ſouls, as being to give an account.* Heb. 13. v. 17. Nay all this buffoonery will reach the perſon of Chriſt himſelf, who has declared that *he who will not hear the church,* (that is, ſubmit to her deciſions) *ſhall be reputed as a heathen and a publican.* Matt. 28. v. 17. However I ſhould not wonder to hear an Atheiſt or Deiſt, who makes a mockery of revelation, diſcourſe in this manner: but it ſounds very abſurdly in the mouth of a Proteſtant, who makes profeſſion of believing a revealed religion. For is it not a manifeſt contradiction to own that amongſt the revealed truths of Chriſtianity there are many above the reach of human underſtanding, and by conſequence above reaſon, though not againſt it (for if they were againſt reaſon, they could not be truths) to own, I ſay, all this, and at the ſame time ridicule an humble ſubmiſſion to ſuch truths? Is not this ſapping the very foundations of faith, and encouraging every body to ſet up the proud idol of his own private judgment againſt the revelation of God, and believe no farther than his poor narrow capacity can comprehend.

G. What you have ſaid, Sir, convinces me fully, that whoever believes, that is, gives his interior aſſent to any thing he neither does nor can comprehend, is properly ſaid to ſubmit his judgment: Nor

Nor do I ſee how it can be expreſſed in terms more intelligible and ſignificant. Since therefore Proteſtants themſelves profeſs the belief of many incomprehenſible myſteries, they ſubmit their judgments juſt as we do, and act incoherently in ridiculing in us, what they are obliged to practiſe themſelves. However, though I am now convinced that the ſubmiſſion you ſpeak of is abſolutely neceſſary in reference to all ſuch truths, as are above our underſtanding, I am not yet ſatisfied as to the buſineſs of examination. Nay, the more I am convinced of the neceſſity and reaſonableneſs of ſubmitting, the more I am at a loſs to find any room left for examination. For to what purpoſe is it to examine, when I am convinced it is my duty to ſubmit.

P. Sir, if it be a duty, it muſt be reaſonable; for we can never act againſt reaſon in doing our duty: And if it be reaſonable, there muſt be ſolid grounds or motives for the doing of it: This is to ſay, ſuch reaſons, grounds, or motives, as exclude all rational doubts, and ought to be yielded to by any man, that pretends to act rationally.

G. That is very certain.

P. Since therefore no man can be convinced by reaſons or motives, unleſs he knows their weight, and this cannot be known without a diligent examination, the conſequence is, that every one according to the meaſure of his capacity ought to examine them with all the ſerioufneſs and application, that is poſſible; to the end that by this diligent examination he may render himſelf a competent judge of the reaſonableneſs of his ſubmiſſion. Whence it follows plainly that examination is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with ſubmiſſion, that even the principal end of it is no other, than a full conviction that our ſubmiſſion is not a raſh

and inconſiderate act, but grounded upon ſolid motives.

Let us exemplify in the myſtery of the Bleſſed Trinity, which of all the myſteries of Chriſtian religion is the moſt unſearchable, and the moſt ſeemingly contrary to human reaſon. For who is there that dares preſume to fathom the depth of it, or form to himſelf any idea, but what falls infinitely ſhort of it? Here then we muſt either renounce Chriſtianity, or ſubmit to the belief of what is wholly incomprehenſible to us: And to render this act of ſubmiſſion reaſonable, what have we elſe to do but to examine the ſolidity of the motives upon which it is grounded. Suppoſe then any one ſhould aſk you, why you believe this dark myſtery, ſince it is wholly incomprehenſible to you? What anſwer would you give him?

G. My anſwer would be, that I believe it becauſe God has revealed it; and it is impoſſible he ſhould reveal a falſhood.

P. Very right, Sir. For the revelation and infinite veracity of God is the proper and eſſential motive of every act of divine faith: becauſe as human faith relies upon human authority; ſo divine faith has nothing leſs than divine authority to vouch for it. But ſuppoſe he ſhould preſs you farther, and aſk how you are aſſured, that God has revealed it?

G. Sir, you have often told me, that we have the greateſt authority upon earth to aſſure us of it: to wit, the Catholic or univerſal church founded by Chriſt himſelf, and appointed by him to be our guide in all ſpiritual matters.

P. It is very true, I have ſo: and I told you nothing but what I was myſelf convinced of by a long and ſerious examination of the full weight of that authority; which to Saint Auſtin appeared ſo great and ſo well eſtabliſhed, that he made no difficulty

difficulty to declare, that nothing but the moſt inſolent madneſs could hinder any man from ſubmitting to its deciſions; and that he would not believe the goſpels themſelves, unleſs the authority of the church compelled him to it. Controv.Ep.Fund. C. 4. meaning doubtleſs, that he would not believe their having been written by divine inſpiration upon any other authority, than that of the Catholic church.

G. But what then is properly the ſubject of our examination? I conceive it is not the truth or nature of the myſteries themſelves, which ſurpaſs all human underſtanding. For who can examine the truth of a thing he cannot underſtand?

P. That is impoſſible. And therefore we do not pretend to ſearch into the nature of the myſteries themſelves; becauſe they are infinitely above the reach of our underſtanding, and no natural principles can lead us to any idea of them. Nor do we examine whether a revealed myſtery be true or falſe; for if it be revealed, it is impiety to queſtion the truth of it; becauſe God's infinite veracity is as eſſential to him as his very being. But the proper ſubject of our examination is, whether we have ſufficient motives to believe, that ſuch or ſuch a point of doctrine has been effectually revealed by God. That is to ſay, whether the proofs or inducements (commonly called the motives of credibility) are of ſufficient weight to convince a rational man, that the church's authority declaring the revelation of that doctrine, may be ſecurely depended upon in the important concern of our ſoul's ſalvation? For without this our belief, that ſuch or ſuch a point of doctrine is revealed by God, would not be a reaſonable act, but raſh and inconſiderate: As it is inconſiderate in any man to believe a thing without ſufficient rational motives to induce him to it. And will any

one after this have the confidence to reproach us, that we oblige our people to proceed blindly, and forbid them to examine the grounds of their faith? Nothing ſurely but a prejudiced heart can prompt them to imagine any ſuch thing.

SECT. 2.

FAITH is not againſt REASON.

G. PRAY, Sir, will you do me the favour to explain yourſelf by ſome particular example.

P. With all my heart; and I cannot do it better than by making the application of what I have ſaid, to the proceedings of the firſt Chriſtians converted by the apoſtles. The fact is this. Twelve poor illiterate men, in whom there appeared nothing to recommend them to the eyes of the world, preſented themſelves on a ſudden in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem; and the people being gathered about them, St. Peter in the name of all the reſt began to preach to them a doctrine, which moſt certainly was ſurpriſing in the higheſt degree: to wit, that the perſon called Jeſus of Nazareth, whom but a few weeks before they had ſeen publicly executed as an infamous malefactor, was the true Son of God: that he had riſen from the dead, ſat at the right hand of his Father in Heaven, and that in a word, he was the very Meſſias foretold by Moſes and the Prophets. This was the ſubſtance of his ſermon; and we all know the effect it had. Three thouſand Jews and Gentiles were immediately converted by it, and embraced the Chriſtian faith.

Now it is plain the doctrine here delivered by St. Peter, contained myſteries which were wonderful and ſurprizing to human reaſon. Yet they firmly believed it; and I preſume no Proteſtant at leaſt will ſay they acted irrationally in ſo doing. It muſt

muſt therefore be granted that they had ſolid motives and inducements to determine them to it. Firſt, in all likelihood the numberleſs and ſtupendious miracles, which Chriſt himſelf had wrought, and which many of them had ſeen, others at leaſt had heard of, diſpoſed them very much to it. And 2dly, they had an unconteſtable miracle before their eyes in the perſon of St. Peter and his fellow-apoſtles. For though they knew them to have been ignorant fiſhermen by trade, that had never ſtudied the law, yet all on a ſudden they heard them quote and explain the Scriptures with the ſame facility, as if they had made it the ſtudy of their whole lives: whence they judged, that their knowledge was not acquired by ordinary human means, but infuſed from above. They likewiſe obſerved their miraculous gift of tongues. For though there were perſons preſent of many different nations, as the Acts inform us, *they all heard them ſpeak in their own tongues*, Acts ii. 8. and ſince this could not be aſcribed to any natural cauſe, they juſtly concluded (God enlightning their underſtanding, and touching their hearts with his holy grace) that they were inſpired men, and that, by conſequence they might ſafely depend upon the truth of their doctrine, to which God himſelf bore witneſs by ſuch miracles, as could not be conteſted with any colour of reaſon. Theſe were the motives or inducements, which rendered their faith perfectly rational, though the myſteries they believed were infinitely above their reaſon.

G. But what conſequence do you draw from thence?

P. I infer from it, that if theſe motives were a ſufficient and ſolid ground of a rational ſubmiſſion to the church's faith even in her very infancy, when the prophecies concerning her future en-

creaſe, magnificence, and ſplendor were not yet verified as they are now, thoſe we have at preſent to convince us of the reaſonableneſs of our relying upon her authority, are much more forcible, when millions of martyrs have ſealed her faith with the laſt drop of their blood; when ſhe has peopled both Earth and Heaven with multitudes of holy confeſſors and virgins, whoſe ſtupendious lives and miracles proclaim the purity of her doctrine; when kings and nations have flocked to her from the remoteſt parts of the world, and the greateſt monarchs upon earth have ſubmitted to her laws. When finally ſhe has now already had a viſible being for near upon ſeventeen hundred years, in ſpight of all the perſecutions raiſed againſt her by the powers of darkneſs, and can ſhew in her own communion an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of biſhops and paſtors from the apoſtles, down to this very time.

G. Theſe motiives of credibility, as you call them, are ſtrong indeed; and muſt either ſuffice to render the church's teſtimony credible, or there is no teſtimony upon earth to be ſecurely depended upon.

P. Whoever examines them ſeriouſly will moſt certainly find them ſo. And ſince they contain nothing but hiſtorical facts, which may eaſily be examined, the caſe fairly and clearly ſtated between Proteſtants and the church of Rome may be decided by this one principle, to wit, that it is an indiſpenſable duty, and by conſequence moſt highly rational, to believe a thing, though ever ſo ſeemingly contrary to reaſon, when we have a moral certainty that God has revealed it.

G. I think the principle is ſelf-evident, and will not bear a diſpute. Becauſe a moral certainty of any fact excludes all reaſonable doubt of it: and if I have no reaſon to doubt but that God has revealed ſuch or ſuch a thing, I muſt be an atheiſt

atheiſt or madman not to believe it. For my refuſing to believe it in that caſe is nothing leſs, than rejecting or ſetting at nought the teſtimony of God himſelf, whereof I am ſuppoſed to have a moral certainty.

P. Yet, as I told you juſt now, there is not a controverſial point between Proteſtants and us, but is fully decided againſt them by this one general principle.

G. I deſire you, Sir, to make this plain to me.

P. I prove it thus. Whatever fact has the teſtimony of the greateſt authority upon earth to vouch for the truth of it, has on its ſide an evidence amounting to ſuch a degree of certainty as is wholly inconſiſtent with a reaſonable fear or ſuſpicion of falſehood. And this is what we call a moral certainty: which though it relies entirely upon human authority, that is, the teſtimony of men, conſidered barely as ſuch, and is therefore far inferior to the infallible certainty of divine faith; yet it is a certainty of ſuch a nature, that a man of ſound judgment cannot but yield to it; and none but perſons prejudiced to a degree of folly or madneſs can reſiſt the force of it. For if it were rational to refuſe our aſſent to a fact thus atteſted, it would likewiſe be rational to deny all hiſtorical facts whatſoever related ſince the death of the ſacred penmen; ſince for the truth of all ſuch facts we neither have nor can have any more than a moral certainty to depend upon.

G. Thus far is clear; and if you can ſhew that the revelation of all the points of Chriſtian doctrine held by us and denied by Proteſtants, is atteſted by an authority equal to that, upon which all men of ſenſe believe the moſt unconnected hiſtorical facts, it will follow that Catholics act moſt rationally in believing them, and Proteſtants act contrary to common ſenſe and reaſon in their diſbelief of them: and ſo all controverſies m[illegible]

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be decided againſt them by the aboveſaid principle; to wit, that it is an indiſpenſable duty, and by conſequence moſt highly rational to believe a thing, though ever ſo ſeemingly contrary to reaſon, when we have a moral certainty that God has revealed it.

P. Well then, Sir, the authority I ſpeak of is not only equal to that, upon which all men of ſenſe believe the moſt unconteſted hiſtorical facts, but far ſuperior to it. It is the authority of the whole Catholic church in all ages ſince the firſt preaching of the goſpel down to this time; which authority is unconteſtably the greateſt upon earth.

Now this church, founded by Chriſt himſelf to be our guide to Heaven; this church ſo venerable for her antiquity and the lineal deſcent of her biſhops and paſtors in the ſame communion from the apoſtles, ſo eminent for her learning, ſo reſpectable for the many crowned heads and nations ſubdued by her, not by violence or force of arms, but by the luſtre of her miracles, and holineſs of her doctrine; finally, ſo illuſtrious for the millions of holy martyrs, and other eminent ſaints, all nurſed in her boſom; this church, I ſay, atteſts and has always atteſted the following hiſtorical facts, to wit, that the twelve apoſtles (the firſt planters of her faith) were all inſpired men; that whatſoever they taught relating to the Chriſtian doctrine, either by word of mouth or by writing, were truths revealed by God, and dictated by the Holy Ghoſt; that they committed theſe heavenly truths, either in writing or by word of mouth, as a ſacred truſt to their ſucceſſors the biſhops and paſtors ordained by them; that theſe were likewiſe commiſſioned to deliver them to thoſe, who were to ſucceed them in the ſacred miniſtry; and that by theſe and their ſucceſſors after them they have thus been handed down to us

for

for revealed truths, from biſhop to biſhop, from paſtor to paſtor, from father to ſon, and from generation to generation throughout all ages, to this very time, in the very ſame manner as the apoſtles creed has been.

Theſe, I ſay, are facts, which have the teſtimony of the church of Chriſt in all ages, that is of the moſt credible and illuſtrious body or ſociety of men upon earth, to vouch for the truth of them; and are therefore even more authentic and better warranted than the moſt memorable facts of prophane hiſtory, which however were never doubted of by any reaſonable man.

Hence I infer, 1ſt, that we have the greateſt moral certainty poſſible, that all the articles of Chriſtian doctrine now taught by the Catholic church are the very ſame, as were at firſt delivered to the ſaints for divine and revealed truths.

I infer, 2dly, that all ſuch points of doctrine, as are maintained by Proteſtants in oppoſition to the Catholic church (though conſidered barely as ſhe is the church of Chriſt, that is, a creditable and illuſtrious ſociety) have the plaineſt mark of falſehood ſtamped upon them; to wit, their having the whole weight of the greateſt authority upon earth, and by conſequence the greateſt moral evidence againſt them.

I infer, 3dly, that all doctrinal points delivered to us for revealed truths by the Catholic church, ſtand upon the ſame bottom, that is, have all the ſame degree of certainty: Whether we conſider them with relation to the divine or to human authority, by which they are aſſerted. Therefore,

I infer, 4thly, that we have the ſame certainty of the revelation of Chriſt's real preſence, for example, in the bleſſed ſacrament; of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, purgatory, invocation of ſaints, honouring their reliques, &c. as we have of the divine inſpiration of ſcriptures; becauſe we have the

ſame

ſame teſtimony or authority to rely upon for the truth of both. Nor can we reaſonably reject the one without rejecting the other; and then we may bid adieu to all revealed religion.

Suppoſe I ſhould aſk a Proteſtant, how he comes to be aſſured that all the canonical books of ſcripture were written by divine inſpiration, and contain the pure word of God? For the inſpiration of them is neither evident to any man's ſenſes, nor can it be drawn as a neceſſary conſequence from any principle of pure reaſon: what other tolerable motive or rational inducement could he alledge for his belief of this capital point, than the teſtimony or authority of the church of Chriſt in all ages aſſerting it to be an unqueſtionable truth? But if this ſuffices to convince his judgment of the inſpiration of ſcriptures, and to oblige him to venture his ſoul's ſalvation upon his belief of it, why will not the ſame teſtimony and authority oblige him likewiſe to believe the revelation of the other articles juſt now mentioned by me? For either the church appointed by Chriſt to be our guide may be ſecurely relied upon or not. If not, a Proteſtant's belief of the inſpiration of ſcriptures is raſh and inconſiderate. But if it may be ſecurely relied upon, he acts incoherently in not believing the other articles declared by her to be revealed truths.

G. I confeſs, I do not ſee by what ſlight or artifice Proteſtants can eſcape from the two horns of this dilemma. For whether they ſay yes or no, it gives their church a mortal blow.

P. I will only add one thing more; to wit, that ſince all are bound under pain of eternal damnation to believe the faith revealed to, and preached by the apoſtles (*he who believeth not, ſhall be condemned*, Mark 16. v. 16.) it is incredible that God ſhould lay this obligation upon us, and at the ſame time leave thoſe, who are to be ſaved by their

their faith in Chriſt, without ſufficient means to know, what truths he has revealed, what not. Now if the teſtimony of the church of Chriſt be not a ſufficient means to convey ſecurely down to us all revealed truths, I deſire a Proteſtant to mark out to us ſome other better and ſurer guide appointed by God in order to that end. But if he cannot do this, as moſt certainly he cannot, yet at the ſame time refuſes to join with us in ſubmitting to all the deciſions of the Catholic church, he muſt either renounce all revealed religion, or profeſs one without having any ſolid or rational motives to induce him to it.

If he ſays, the ſcriptures divinely inſpired ſuffice alone to teach him all revealed truths, the only anſwer I ſhall give him at preſent is, that this eludes the difficulty, but does not clear it. For it remains ſtill unanſwered, how a Proteſtant without relying upon the church's teſtimony or authority, can have a rational motive to aſſure him of the divine inſpiration of ſcriptures? And if he be obliged to depend upon her teſtimony in this capital point, how can he reaſonably refuſe to pay the ſame ſubmiſſion to her in other articles as poſitively declared by her to be revealed truths, as the divine inſpiration of ſcriptures? For ſurely all the motives of credibility are as ſtrong on her ſide in her teſtimony of the one as of the other.

SECT. 3.

FAITH depends in a different manner on the Teſtimony of God, and on the Teſtimony of Men.

G. SIR, though I am fully convinced that Proteſtants act incoherently in depending upon the church's teſtimony in ſome things and rejecting it in others, becauſe her authority has the ſame weight in all her deciſions, yet ſince her teſtimony

teſtimony is but the teſtimony of men, on which no more than a human faith and moral certainty can be built, I cannot yet conceive how we attain that divine faith, which can never be without an infallible certainty.

P. Sir, the faith you ſpeak of is *a ſupernatural gift of God, formed in us by the Holy Ghoſt*, Eph. ii. 8. But this excludes not the uſe of ſuch natural and human means, as God demands of us to diſpoſe our ſouls for this heavenly bleſſing. So that although divine faith be wholly ſupernatural in itſelf, yet in as much as it is likewiſe rational (for otherwiſe it would not be a virtue) it preſuppoſes and depends upon a natural and acquired knowledge of the proofs and motives, which by the help of God's holy grace diſpoſe us to it.

Hence it is that every aſſent of divine faith may be conſidered either as it is infallibly certain, or as it is reaſonable; and in regard of theſe two inſeparable properties, it depends upon a twofold teſtimony, viz. the teſtimony of God, and the teſtimony of the church of Chriſt, conſidered barely as it is a creditable and illuſtrious body or ſociety of men. An aſſent of faith, conſidered as infallibly certain, relies wholly and ſolely upon the revelation or teſtimony of God: For to believe a thing upon any other motive than becauſe God has revealed it, is not divine but human faith. But becauſe this divine teſtimony or revelation is not ſelf-evident, therefore to render our belief of it rational, it is neceſſary to depend upon the church's teſtimony to inform us, what thoſe truths are, which were revealed to the apoſtles, and by them committed as a ſacred truſt to their ſucceſſors, in order to be handed down to us for revealed truths from age to age.

For this reaſon St. Paul ſays, that *faith is by hearing*, Rom. x. 17. to wit, by hearing the

voice

voice of the church appointed by God to be our guide. For unleſs we hear the voice of the church ſpeaking to us by the mouths of her biſhops and paſtors, how ſhall we know what are revealed truths, and what are not? And if we know not what truths are revealed, we cannot make the teſtimony or revelation of God the motive of our belief of them. Whence it follows, that though our faith relies wholly and ſolely upon the divine teſtimony as its proper and eſſential motive, it relies alſo upon the teſtimony of men as on a condition neceſſary for the ſecure conveyance of it to us.

The voice of the church is an echo between the word of God and us. What God has ſpoken (that is, revealed) is moſt infallibly true; and we believe it for no other reaſon, but becauſe he who is truth itſelf, has ſpoken it. But unleſs the church performed the part of a faithful echo, how ſhould we know that God has ſpoken? Or how would faith be by hearing, as the Apoſtle tells us, unleſs God's holy word, which he ſpoke or revealed to the apoſtles, were made audible to us by their ſucceſſors in all ages? We therefore believe the revealed myſteries of faith, merely becauſe God has revealed them: and we believe the church, as the moſt credible and illuſtrious witneſs, that God has effectually revealed them.

G. But, Sir, you have always told me that the church of Chriſt is infallible. And why then do you inſiſt ſo much upon her authority, merely as ſhe is an illuſtrious ſociety of men? For ſurely her teſtimony carries much more weight, if we conſider her as abſolutely infallible. Nay a man muſt be ſtark mad not to ſubmit to an infallible guide.

P. Sir, the reaſon why I have hitherto conſidered her barely as an illuſtrious and creditable ſociety, that is, without any regard to the divine promiſe to infallibility made to her, is, firſt, be-

cauſe

cauſe her teſtimony, barely as ſuch, ſuffices alone to render our belief of the revelation, even of the darkeſt and ſublimeſt myſteries, perfectly rational, which is the point I juſt now undertook to prove. But 2dly, to avoid the juſt reproach of ſuppoſing what I ought firſt to prove. For the church's infallibility is itſelf a revealed truth; and if I ſhould prove the reaſonableneſs of my belief of it from the church's teſtimony conſidered as infallible, my argument would run thus; it is reaſonable to believe that the church's infallibility is a revealed truth becauſe the infallible church declares it to be ſo; which is the ſame abſurd way of arguing, as if I ſhould ſay, it is reaſonable to believe a thing is ſo, becauſe it is ſo. But ſince the church's teſtimony, though conſidered barely as the teſtimony of men, has the ſame weight and authority in declaring to us the divine revelation of her own infallibility, as it has in declaring all other revealed truths; I act as rationally in ſuffering myſelf to be directed by her judgment in this point as in any other: that is, in believing the divine revelation of her own infallibility, with the ſame firmneſs and ſecurity, as I do for example, the divine inſpiration of ſcriptures: becauſe I have the ſame rational motives or inducements to convince me, that the one is as truly and credibly conveyed to me as the other.

Now then to come to your queſtion, how we attain that divine faith which is attended with an infallible certainty? I anſwer, that the church's authority, though conſidered barely as an illuſtrious ſociety, being once clearly eſtabliſhed by thoſe rational proofs, which we call the motives of credibility, her teſtimony is a legal and ſufficient evidence to build a moral certainty upon, that God has effectually revealed thoſe doctrinal points, which ſhe propoſes to her children as articles of ſaving

ſaving faith, and terms of communion. Now when the divine revelation of any doctrinal point is ſo credibly manifeſted to us, as to leave no room for any reaſonable doubt of the truth of it: that is, when we have a moral certainty that God has revealed it, we are then bound to believe it upon his teſtimony or revelation, as is manifeſt to common ſenſe: and our aſſent to it upon this motive being formed in our ſouls by God's grace enlightening our underſtanding and touching our hearts, is what we call divine faith; becauſe its immediate and only motive is wholly divine: though the conveyance and application of it to us depends remotely upon the human means I have juſt now mentioned. And ſo it is that our faith is both divine and rational. It is divine in being built upon the teſtimony of God as on its only proper motive; and it is rational in relying upon the church's authority for the conveyance of the divine teſtimony truly and credibly to us.

Hence it is, that the divine inſpiration of ſcriptures, for example, being thus credibly conveyed to us as an article of revealed faith by the church's teſtimony, we regard thoſe ſacred oracles in all their parts, whether hiſtorical or dogmatical, not as the writings or doctrines of men, but as the pure word of God: ſo that whatever we believe upon their teſtimony, we believe upon the teſtimony of God himſelf, and as having the divine veracity to vouch for the truth of it.

Now amongſt many other ſacred truths clearly delivered in holy writ, that of the church's infallibility may juſtly claim an eminent place; though Proteſtants uſe their utmoſt efforts to ridicule what they cannot ſolidly confute.

SECT.

SECT. 4.

The CHURCH of CHRIST conſidered as infallible.

G. BUT if the church's infallibility be ſo clearly taught in holy writ, as you ſay it is, how comes it that the whole body of Proteſtants, among whom there are numberleſs perſons eminent for wit and learning, ſhould ſee nothing of this doctrine in thoſe ſacred writings? For whatever is clear in itſelf, is obvious to be ſeen by every body, at leaſt by perſons of ſound judgment.

P. Sir, if this reaſon were concluſive, the world would be much happier than we have hitherto found it to be. For all wilful blindneſs and obſtinacy would be baniſhed out of it: whereas we find the contrary almoſt by daily experience even in the moſt ordinary occurrences of human life; and it is a good ſaying of Mr. Leſley, in his treatiſe of private judgment; to wit, that it is in vain to offer to ſhew a man any thing, till you have firſt perſuaded him to open his eyes. Becauſe none are ſo blind as they who will not ſee, and none ſo deaf as they who will not hear. If a man be reſolved to ſhut his eyes at noonday, the brighteſt objects and the ſun itſelf will become inviſible to him: and ſo will the cleareſt truths to one blinded againſt them with intereſt or any prevailing paſſion.

G. I own, Sir, that though I am but young, I have obſerved a great deal of this in ſeveral perſons I have been converſant with: who, though otherwiſe eſteemed men of ſound judgment, ſeemed to be utter ſtrangers even to common ſenſe, when the diſcourſe chanced to fall upon ſubjects, wherein either their intereſt, or ſome party-cauſe was concerned. But can we ſay that this is the caſe of Proteſtants

Proteſtants in reference to the ſubject in queſtion?

P. Sir, it is their caſe in the higheſt degree: becauſe the main ſtrength, intereſt and reputation of their cauſe depends upon their running down the church's infallibility. For if they allowed her to be infallible in her deciſions of faith, the immediate conſequence would be, that they muſt likewiſe allow her to be irreformable in her faith. And what would then become of the pretended reformation? It is manifeſt the authors and abettors of it would be regarded as perſons fitter to be begged than reaſoned with. And ſo it is no wonder that all the reformed churches, though diſagreeing among themſelves in many other doctrinal points, join unanimouſly in oppoſing the church's title to infallibility. Becauſe their all is at ſtake in this controverſy: and if it be clearly decided againſt them by the unerring teſtimony of ſcriptures, the whole ſtructure of the pretended reformation muſt fall to the ground of courſe, or like the tower of Babel ſtand only as a monument of the extravagance and folly of the architects, that built it.

G. I plainly ſee, that if the church's title to infallibility were ſo clearly made out, as to force her adverſaries to an acknowledgement of it, the reformation would be not only a defenceleſs, but an impudent cauſe, and the reforming trade would ſtarve for want of buſineſs to employ it: which indeed renders it very ſuſpicious, that their unanimous oppoſition to it is not wholly the effect of a diſintereſted zeal, but favours very much of that of the Epheſian ſilver-ſmiths who raiſed a furious tumult againſt St. Paul, for fear of loſing the chief profit of their trade, if the worſhip of their goddeſs Diana ſhould by his preaching have been brought into contempt, Acts xix. 23, 24, &c.

P. Your

P. Your obſervation is very juſt, and you will be more fully convinced of it, when I have brought you acquainted, as I ſhall do hereafter, with ſome remarkable circumſtances relating to thoſe aſtoniſhing changes in religion, which were gloſſed over with the ſpecious name of a thorough godly reformation. I will only tell you at preſent, that the fiery zeal of the chief managers of this pretended godly work, would in all probability ſoon have been cooled, had they not found reforming in thoſe days of ſacrilegious ſpoil and rapine a much more beneficial trade than that of the Epheſian ſilverſmiths, who worked only for bread, which they were afraid would be taken out of their mouths, if St. Paul had been ſuffered to continue his preaching amongſt them. But our reforming gentlemen had nothing leſs in view than the wallowing in wealth and pleaſures, by the plunder of their mother-church; and the glittering proſpect of enriching themſelves, with the coſtly plate and jewels, beſides the goodly manors, wherewith the religious generoſity of her pious anceſtors had endowed her, glared ſo in their eyes, and dazzled their ſight in ſuch a manner, that though they had themſelves acknowledged and reſpected her for ſeveral years, as the beautiful ſpouſe of Jeſus Chriſt, without ſpot or wrinkle in her faith, they could at that time ſee no remains in her of her former beauty. The venerable antiquity of her doctrine, her catholicity, the luſtre of her miracles, the ſtateline ſs and ſolemnity of her hierarchy derived from the apoſtles themſelves, the celibacy of her clergy, the auſtere lives of her religious orders, and the majeſty of her public ſervice (all which had in former ages rendered her the admiration of mankind, and with their powerful attractions drawn multitudes of infidels into her fold) had then loſt all their charms in the

the eyes of her own rebellious children, who made them the ſubject of their profane lampoons and ſatyrs, as they intended to make her ſacred ornaments and veſſels the inſtruments of their luxury and riots.

But her title to infallibility, the moſt valuable of all the prerogatives beſtowed upon her by her heavenly ſpouſe, was their greateſt grievance. And it was indeed a grievance not to be tolerated: for unleſs this ſtone of offence and rock of ſcandal, had firſt been removed, there would have been no room even for the weakeſt foundation to build the reformation upon. No impeachment of idolatry and ſuperſtition could have been forged, no bill of damnable errors brought againſt her: And without errors there could be no reformation, and without a reformation there was no hopes of plunder; which was too ſweet a morſel to be ſlighted for the inſipid advantage of a little truth. And ſo it was reſolved, nemine contradicente, by all the apoſtles of the reformation, that there ſhould be no ſuch thing as an infallible church upon earth; in ſpite of all that Papiſts ſhould produce for it, either from the unanimous teſtimony of the ancient fathers, or from the conſtant faith of former ages, or from the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt texts of holy ſcriptures.

As for the fathers, they eaſily got rid of them by ſaying they were all parties, and avowed abettors of Popery. To what purpoſe (ſaid the courageous Martin Luther) ſhould any man rely on the ancient fathers, whoſe authority was revered for ſo many ages? For were not they too all blind? L. d. Serv. Arb. tom. 2. fol. 408. 2. And again, neither do I concern myſelf what Ambroſe, Auſtin, the councils or practice of ages ſay. I know their opinions ſo well, that I have declared againſt them. Controv. regem. Ang. tom. 2. fol. 347. 1. "I care not

not a ruſh if a thouſand Auſtins, or a thouſand Cyprians ſtood againſt me," fol. 344. This was plain dealing without hypocriſy or diſſimulation.

As to the faith of former ages, beſides that both Luther and Calvin confeſſed without heſitation, that they had ſeparated themſelves from the communion of all the pre-exiſting churches in the world, the book of Homilies, highly valued by the church of England, declares poſitively, that both laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, ſects and degrees of men, women and children of whole Chriſtendom, have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; and that for the ſpace of eight hundred years and more. Which, though in very abuſive language, is a full acknowledgment of a fact, which does no honour to the reformation; to wit, that not one of the reformed churches, had a viſible being in the world for eight hundred years and more: and ſo the faith of former ages, ſtigmatized indeed with the injurious title of abominable idolatry, was fairly given up to the church of Rome, and acknowledged to have been wholly on the Popiſh ſide.

But as to the texts of holy ſcriptures, which Proteſtants own to be divinely inſpired, and by conſequence out of the reach of a godly reformation, here indeed they were put to very hard ſhifts. For the texts are clear and ſtrong, and muſt be tortured in the moſt unmerciful manner, or read backwards, to diſcover any thing in them but the church's perpetual infallibility ſettled upon the moſt ſolid foundations.

G. Pray, Sir, do me the favour to let me hear thoſe texts.

P. The firſt is Chriſt's poſitive promiſe to *build his church upon a rock, and that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, Matth. xvi. 18. For if

if the word of God may be ſecurely depended upon, nothing ſurely can be clearer or ſtronger than this promiſe: ſince it is manifeſt, that if the church of Chriſt were ever really guilty of the damnable errors Proteſtants have charged her with, the gates of Hell would have effectually prevailed againſt her, and her divine founder proved falſe to his word.

G. That is blaſphemy with a witneſs. But will not Proteſtants ſay, it is not the true church of Chriſt, but the corrupt church of Rome, they accuſe of damnable errors; and that theſe are as different as light and darkneſs?

P. Sir, the diſpute is preciſely concerning the church founded by Chriſt, which they maintain to be not only fallible, but that it has effectually fallen into the damnable errors of Popiſh idolatry and ſuperſtition. It is therefore in vain to pretend to elude the force of the aboveſaid text by ſaying, that it is not the true church of Chriſt, but the corrupt church of Rome, they accuſe of damnable errors; and there is an unanſwerable dilemma againſt them. For Chriſt either had a true church upon earth before the reformation, or he had not. If not, then his church was utterly deſtroyed, and by conſequence the gates of Hell prevailed againſt it, contrary to his promiſe. But if he had a true church upon earth, the church of Rome was moſt certainly that church, ſince according to the large conceſſion made in the book of Homilies, it was in poſſeſſion of whole Chriſtendom for many ages before the reformation: and if that church was in all that ſpace of time guilty of abominable idolatry, as is pretended, then the true church of Chriſt was guilty of it: and ſo what part ſoever of the dilemma Proteſtants chooſe, they charge Chriſt with a breach of promiſe, in ſuffering the gates of Hell to prevail againſt his church. But

to reſume the thread of my diſcourſe, which you have interrupted.

2dly, Chriſt's promiſe to his Apoſtles of *abiding with them always, even unto the end of the world.* Math. 28. v. 20. eſtabliſhes the church's perpetual infallibility as fully and clearly as the other. For it cannot be pretended, that this promiſe regarded the perſons of the Apoſtles alone, who were not to live to the end of the world, but comprehended equally all their ſucceſſors in the apoſtolic miniſtry, as long as the world ſhall laſt. So that the force of it cannot be eluded by the precarious interpretation of thoſe, who preſume to limit it to the third or fourth ages, during which, ſay they, the goſpel was preached in its full purity, that is, without any mixture of thoſe idolatrous and ſuperſtitious practices, which crept afterwards inſenſibly into the church. For can any man be ſo exorbitantly blind as not to ſee that this is a flat contradiction to the expreſs words of the text? Since our Saviour ſaid not, lo I am with you for ſuch or ſuch a term of years: but he ſaid, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. If therefore Chriſt has kept his word, which no man can deny without blaſphemy, one of theſe two things muſt be granted, to wit, that either he promiſed to remain with idolaters in order to be their guide and teacher even unto the end of the world (and this is moſt highly abſurd) or that his church, by being in all ages under the promiſed direction and aſſiſtance of her heavenly guide, has always continued untainted in her faith, and will continue ſo to the world's end.

3dly, The church's charter of perpetual infallibility is confirmed to her by our Saviour's promiſe of ſending the Holy Ghoſt not only to the Apoſtles, but to all their ſucceſſors. *I will pray my*

my Father, and he will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth. Joh. 14. v. 16. 17. But to what end was he to abide with them for ever? Let us hear Chriſt himſelf anſwer the queſtion. *When the ſpirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.* Joh. 16. v. 13. And again. *The Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, which I have ſaid unto you.* Joh. 14. v. 26.

G. Really, Sir, I am aſtoniſhed, that perſons, who pretend to believe, that the ſcriptures are divinely inſpired, and contain the pure word of God; nay, and profeſs to make them the only rule of their faith (as you have often told me) can read theſe repeated promiſes expreſſed in terms ſo ſtrong and clear, ſo obvious and eaſy, that even the moſt ordinary capacities cannot well miſtake their meaning without ſtudying to deceive themſelves, yet at the ſame time have the confidence to oppoſe the doctrine, thus plainly aſſerted by them, with the ſame poſitiveneſs and obſtinacy, as if they had the alcoran inſtead of the word of God before them.

P. Sir, you have all the reaſon in the world to be aſtoniſhed at it, and I verily believe, that if a friend ſhould leave to any Proteſtant a conſiderable legacy, or ſettle an eſtate upon him and his heirs for ever, in terms as ſtrong and clear, as our bleſſed Saviour has by his laſt will and teſtament bequeathed to his church the divine legacy of his perpetual direction and aſſiſtance, he would be clear-ſighted enough to underſtand the true meaning of it; and there would be no need of any perſuaſive arguments or reaſons to convince him of the juſtice of his title. But, alas, to a perſon, whoſe heart is inſincere and

biaſed by an intereſt irreconcilable with the goſpel, to ſuch a one, I ſay, the word of God is as ſeed that falls upon a barren ground, and remains without fruit. The very cleareſt light is darkneſs to him, and he can extract falſehood out of truth itſelf, when it chimes not with his intereſt.

G. It is very certain, that whoever has his heart ſtrongly ſet upon any worldly intereſt, ſees every thing through falſe glaſſes. For it leſſens or magnifies things, and makes them appear beautiful or deformed, right or wrong, true or falſe, juſt as they flatter or thwart that intereſt: and we may almoſt with as much hopes of ſucceſs undertake to calm a ſtorm, or ſilence a hurricane with demonſtrations, as make a man yield to reaſon againſt an intereſt, that lies near his heart. Nay, I have known perſons as ſharp-ſighted in their temporal concerns as the cunningeſt ſophiſters upon earth, yet at the ſame time as dull and blind as beetles in all matters relating to the concerns of the other world. So true it is, that intereſt both opens and ſhuts men's eyes, according as the objects, that preſent themſelves, are agreeable or diſagreeable to it.

However that be, ſince the doctrine of the church's infallibility is a point of ſuch great importance, how comes it that it has not a place allotted to it in the apoſtles' creed?

SECT. 5.

The Church's perpetual Indefectibility and Infallibility, proved from the 9th article of the Creed.

P. YOU may as well aſk, why the ſacraments, the divine inſpiration of ſcriptures, and many other articles of great importance have no place in it? But are they therefore not to be believed? God forbid they ſhould not. The reaſon therefore

therefore of both is, becauſe that profeſſion of faith, which is called the apoſtles creed, never was intended to expreſs all doctrinal points, but only the principle and moſt diſtinguiſhing myſteries of Chriſtian religion. As for the reſt, they are all contained in general under the article concerning the church: becauſe believing the church implies believing her whole doctrine.

G. But pray, Sir, was this creed compoſed by the apoſtles themſelves?

P. Several of the ancient fathers were of opinion it was. As St. Leo, St. Auſtin, St. Jerom, &c. quoted by Mr. Nichol in his expoſition of the creed. But whether it be ſo or not, the authority and antiquity of it, were never queſtioned by any: nor was it ever doubted, but that the 12 articles, whereof it is compoſed, contain nothing but revealed truths, and were delivered for ſuch to the firſt Chriſtians by the apoſtles themſelves.

Now then let us conſider what this creed ſays, concerning the church of Chriſt. The 9th article is worded thus. I believe the holy Catholic church, the communion of ſaints. To which are added in the Nicene creed the two titles of one and apoſtolical: and the 8th of the 39 articles of the Proteſtant religion declares, that both theſe creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed, becauſe they may be proved by moſt certain warrant of holy ſcriptures. In effect the Nicene creed is nothing but the apoſtles creed ſomewhat enlarged upon.

But I deſire you to take notice, that according to this 8th article of that religion, neither of the two aboveſaid creeds can ever be falſe. 1ſt. Becauſe they may be both proved by moſt certain warrant of holy ſcriptures; and 2dly, becauſe we are bound thoroughly to receive and believe them. Now ſurely no falſhood can be proved by moſt certain warrant of holy ſcriptures; nor can the contradictory

dictory to that, which is ſo proved, be the neceſſary object of a Chriſtian's faith. But before I make my own remarks upon the creed itſelf, I will repeat to you the words of a learned Proteſtant biſhop, Dr. Pearſon, biſhop of Cheſter, in his expoſition of the creed, quoted by the author of the rule of faith. 2d. Part. Pref. p. vii. &c. His words, as far as are relating to my ſubject, are theſe.

" When I ſay, I believe the holy Catholic church, " I mean (ſays he) that there is a church, which " is holy, and which is Catholic. p. 335. Edit. 4. " It is not only an acknowledgement of a church " which ſhall be, but alſo of that which is, p. 341. " That which was, when the creed began, and " was to continue till the creed ſhall end, is pro- " poſed to our belief in every age as being: and " thus ever ſince the church was conſtituted, the " church itſelf as being was the object of the " faith of the church believing. The exiſtence " therefore of the church of Chriſt (as that church " is before underſtood by us, p. 336, that is, as a " viſible and known ſociety) is the continuation of " it in an actual being from the firſt collection of " it in the time of the apoſtles unto the con- " ſummation of all things. A collection unin- " terruptedly continued in an actual exiſtence of " believing perſons and congregations in all ages " unto the end of the world, p. 342.

" Now this indeed is a proper object of faith, " becauſe it is grounded only upon the promiſe of " God. There can be no other aſſurance of the " perpetuity of this church, but what we have " from him that built it. The church is not of " ſuch a nature, as would neceſſarily once be- " gun preſerve itſelf for ever. Many thouſand " perſons have fallen totally from the faith pro- " feſſed, and ſo apoſtatized from the church.

" Many

" Many particular churches have been wholly " loſt, many candleſticks have been removed, p. " 342. But though the providence of God does " ſuffer many particular churches to periſh, yet the " promiſe of the ſame God will never permit that " all of them at once ſhall periſh. When Chriſt " ſpoke firſt particularly to St. Peter, he ſealed his " ſpeech with a powerful promiſe of perpetuity, " ſaying: *thou art* Peter, *and upon this rock I* " *will build my church, and the gates of Hell* " *ſhall not prevail againſt it.* When he ſpoke ge- " nerally to all the reſt of the apoſtles, *go teach* " *all nations baptizing them*, &c. Math. 28. 19. " he added a promiſe to the ſame effect, *and lo I* " *am with you always even unto the end of the* " *world.* The firſt of theſe promiſes aſſures us " of the continuance of the church, becauſe it is " built upon a rock——the latter of theſe pro- " miſes gives not only an aſſurance of the con- " tinuance of the church, but alſo the cauſe of " that continuance, which is the preſence of " Chriſt, p. 342. Wherefore being Chriſt does pro- " miſe his preſence unto the church even to the " end of the world, he does thereby aſſure us of " the exiſtence of the church until that time, " of which his preſence is the cauſe. Indeed " this is *the city of the Lord of Hoſts, the city of* " *our God: God will eſtabliſh it for ever*, as the " great prophet of the church has ſaid, *Pſal.* 48. " v. 8. p. 342. Upon the certainty of this truth " the exiſtence of the church has been propounded " as an object of our faith in every age of Chriſti- " anity, and ſo it ſhall be ſtill unto the end of the " world, p. 343."

I omit a great deal relating to the church's unity; that is, her being in one communion, out of which he proves ſalvation to be impoſſible from

many texts of ſcripture. But he concludes his diſcourſe in the following manner.

" Whoever then profeſſes to believe the holy " Catholic church, is underſtood to declare thus " much. I am fully perſuaded and make a free " confeſſion of this as of a neceſſary and infallible " truth, that Chriſt by the preaching of the " apoſtles did gather unto himſelf a church con- " ſiſting of thouſands of believing perſons, and " numerous congregations, to which he daily add- " ed ſuch as ſhould be ſaved, and will ſucceſſively " add unto the ſame, to the end of the world. So " that by virtue of his all-ſufficient promiſe, I " am aſſured that there was, has been hitherto, " now is, and hereafter will be, as long as the " ſun and moon endure, a church of Chriſt one " and the ſame. This church I believe in " general, holy in reſpect of the author, end, " inſtitution, and adminiſtration of it. Particu- " larly in the members here I acknowledge it really " holy, and in the ſame hereafter perfectly holy. I " look upon this church not like that of the " Jews, limited to one people, confined to one " nation, but by the appointment and command " of Chriſt, and by the efficacy of his aſſiſting " power to be diſſeminated through all nations, " to be extended to all places, to be propagated " to all ages, to contain in it all truths neceſſary " to be known, to exact abſolute obedience from " all men, to the commands of Chriſt, and to " furniſh us with all graces neceſſary to make our " perſons acceptable, and our actions well-plea- " ſing in the ſight of God. And thus I believe " the holy Catholic church."

It is thus this learned writer has delivered the true and genuine meaning of the 9th article of the creed.

G. It really appears to me, that if the church of Rome had given this Proteſtant biſhop a fee to plead her cauſe, he could not have done it more effectually: and it puts me in mind of this celebrated maxim, *magna eſt veritas & prævalet.* The force of truth is great, and triumphs over falſhood, even by the judgment of its enemies.

P. I ſhall content myſelf with inferring only one conſequence from his words: viz. that the indefectibility of the true church of Chriſt is an article of faith invincibly proved from the apoſtles creed; which whoever pronounces, makes an acknowledgment (ſays the biſhop) not only of a church which has been or of a church which ſhall be, but alſo of that church which is. And again, I am aſſured (ſays he) that there was, has been hitherto, now is, and hereafter will be as long as the ſun and moon endure, a church of Chriſt one and the ſame. Which in effect is the ſame as to ſay, that when we ſay the creed, we profeſs it to be an article of faith, that the true church of Chriſt is indefectible: that it has ſubſiſted in all paſt ages ſince its firſt eſtabliſhment, and will ſubſiſt in all ſucceeding ages to the end of the world.

Chriſt therefore according to the creed has always had, and always will have a true and orthodox church upon earth. But what are the eſſential and unchangeable attributes or properties of this church according to the ſame creed? They conſiſt in her being one, holy, apoſtolical, and the communion of Saints. Now this is an unanſwerable proof both of her indefectibility and infallibility. For if ſhe ſhould———

G. Hold Sir, before you proceed, pray let me know the difference between the church's indefectibility and infallibility.

P. Sir, by the former is meant, that ſhe never will periſh, or fail, or be deſtroyed entirely: and by the latter, that ſhe will always be an unerring guide in her deciſions of faith: and by both together, that ſhe is an unerring guide always in being, always ſubſiſting, always viſible. For if the church of Chriſt ſhould ever become inviſible, or be entirely deſtitute of true biſhops and paſtors; that is, if the ſucceſſion of her biſhops and paſtors deſcending from the apoſtles ſhould fail entirely, then as a family without an heir is ſaid to be extinct, ſo the true church of Chriſt, which was built by him upon the foundation of the apoſtles, and ſubſiſts by the ſpiritual generation of her biſhops and paſtors, would be ſaid to periſh and loſe her being: and the impoſſibility of this, as being inconſiſtent with the promiſes of God, is called her indefectibility.

In like manner, if ſhe ſhould teach doctrines oppoſite to the faith once delivered to the ſaints, that is, to the faith revealed to the apoſtles, and by them depoſited as a ſacred truſt with their ſucceſſors; if ſhe ſhould impoſe abominable errors (ſuch as idolatry and ſuperſtitions) upon the faithful, and demanded of them terms of communion, which are inconſiſtent with ſalvation, ſhe would moſt certainly ceaſe to be an unerring guide: the impoſſibility whereof, as being likewiſe inconſiſtent with the poſitive and repeated promiſes of God, is what we call her infallibility: which in reality means no more, than that the divine providence will in ſpight of the gates of Hell, or powers of darkneſs, moſt infallibly bring to paſs, what he has moſt mercifully promiſed. and for the certainty of this we have the teſtimony of the creed itſelf; as I was juſt now going to prove, when you interrupted me.

G. I re-

G. I remember you told me, that the eſſential and inſeperated attributes or proprieties of the true church, according to the creed, conſiſt in her being one, holy, apoſtolical, and the communion of ſaints.

P. Very right Sir; and this, as I likewiſe told you, is an unanſwerable proof both of her indefectibility and infallibility. For if ſhe ſhould either fail entirely, or ceaſe to be either one, or holy, or apoſtolical; or the communion of ſaints, the 9th article of the creed would then be falſe, and whoever ſhould at that time ſay it, would utter a downright lie in making a profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith. But ſince it is manifeſt blaſphemy to ſay that the creed (which may be proved by moſt certain warrant of holy ſcriptures) can ever be falſe; or that a perſon can be guilty of lying in profeſſing the Chriſtian doctrine taught by the apoſtles, it follows that the abovefaid 9th article of the creed contains a demonſtrative proof, that the church of Chriſt has always been, and will always be an unerring guide, that is, infallible in her deciſions of faith, and that by conſequence, ſhe never was guilty of the abominable errors laid to her charge by her rebellious children.

That the creed in the ſuppoſed caſe would be falſe, is manifeſt to common ſenſe. Becauſe if the church really fell into theſe damnable errors, how can it be ſaid, that ſhe was then either one, or holy, or apoſtolical, or the communion of ſaints? This implies a manifeſt contradiction. For in the firſt place, ſhe would then moſt certainly have forfeited her unity, by falling from her former faith. For can a church that changes her faith, be properly called one and the ſame? On the contrary, inſtead of continuing what ſhe was by her divine eſtabliſhment, (viz.) the true and only orthodox

thodox church of Chriſt, ſhe would have become an heritical communion, and the very ſynagogue of Satan: nay a ſource of diviſions, and author of ſchiſm; in as much as her own children would then have been bound to ſeperate themſelves from her. Nor could ſhe then be holy, unleſs idolatry or other groſs errors be a holy doctrine: nor apoſtolical; becauſe the apoſtles never taught idolatry, nor any damnable errors: nor finally, the communion of ſaints; becauſe they cannot be ſaints, who communicate with an idolatrous church.

G. Sir, if I have a true underſtanding of your meaning, the ſubſtance of what you have ſaid may be ſummed up in this ſhort ſyllogiſm. If the church, which in the creed we profeſs to be one, holy, apoſtolical, &c. ſhould ever fall into any errors deſtructive to the ſaving faith at firſt delivered to the ſaints, then the creed would be falſe: but the creed can never be falſe, therefore ſhe can never fall into any ſuch errors: and is by conſequence infallible in all her deciſions of faith.

P. You have taken my meaning very exactly: and I dare preſume to ſay the argument is concluſive againſt all ſuch, as pretend to believe the creed. I ſhall only add the teſtimony of St. Paul, who relying with an entire confidence upon the promiſes of God, made no difficulty to pronounce the *church of Chriſt* to be *the pillar and ſupport of the truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. Now I preſume theſe words of St. Paul have always been, and will always be true. But how can they be true, if the church eſtabliſhed by Chriſt ever propoſes falſe Doctrines for revealed truths?, Or requires things inconſiſtent with ſalvation for conditions of communion? Can ſhe always be the pillar and ſupport of the truth, unleſs ſhe be always

ways an unerring guide in matters of faith? And if ſhe be ſuch a guide, I ſhall aſk one queſtion more, how can her faith be reformed?

G. I ſee no other anſwer to be made to this queſtion but boldly aſſerting, that St. Paul's epiſtles, nay and the goſpels as well as the creed, all which give evidence for the doctrine of infallibility, ſtand full as much in need of a thorough godly reformation as the church of Rome itſelf. However I have a ſmall difficulty to propoſe, viz. How a body or ſociety of men can be infallible, when all the members that compoſe it are fallible, as moſt certainly all men are.

P. You may as well aſk, how can the nation aſſembled in parliament make laws, when there is not a ſingle man in the whole nation can make a law? This however is the wiſe objection of ſeveral Proteſtant writers, and the ſhort anſwer to it is, that God beſtows his favours on whom, and in what manner he pleaſes. Now the church's infallibility does not depend upon any extraordinary inward lights or inſpirations of particular perſons, but is grounded wholly upon the gratuitous promiſes of God. And cannot he beſtow this privilege upon the whole body of the church, without granting it to each, or even to any one particular member of it? Cannot he permit this or that biſhop or paſtor in particular to apoſtatize from the faith, without permitting the whole epiſcopal order aud hierarchy to be involved in the ſame apoſtacy? The contrary is manifeſt from numberleſs facts. For (as bp. Pearſon, has very judiciouſly obſerved) though the providence of God has ſuffered even whole particular churches to periſh, yet the promiſes of the ſame God will never permit, that they all periſh at once. So that although many dead branches have already been cut off, and more perhaps will be cut off hereafter, the body

body of the church will always continue alive and growing: becauſe Chriſt has promiſed to abide with her always even to the end of the world. And ſo ſhe will always continue to be the pillar and ſupport of the truth; the divine Providence diſpoſing all things ſo for her perpetual preſervation, that in ſpight of the natural infirmities or fallibility of her biſhops or paſtors, God's promiſes will infallibly be made good, and he will never ſuffer his church to impoſe on her children any doctrines for revealed truths or terms of communion, but what were at firſt delivered for ſuch by the apoſtles themſelves, and have ſince been handed down from them by their ſucceſſors in apoſtolic miniſtry.

SECT. 6.

The RULE of FAITH.

THIS leads me to the examination of another material point relating to the general grounds of Catholic religion, to wit, the rule by which the Catholic church, which is our guide, directs itſelf in all it's deciſions of faith: that is, by which it judgeth, what doctrines have been revealed to the apoſtles, and what not. This we call the rule of faith: and the queſtion concerning it is, whether the written word of God alone be ſuch a full and compleat rule, that all points of revealed faith, are plainly expreſſed in it. Proteſtants generally hold it is. But the church of Rome has conſtantly maintained, That apoſtolical tradition is a neceſſary part of this rule, and that without it we ſhould be wholly in the dark, in reference to many important articles, both of the Chriſtian faith and worſhip: as has of late been fully demonſtrated in a book entituled the rule of faith; printed An. 1721. the author whereof has handled this

this ſubject ſo amply as well as ſolidly, that nothing can be added to it. So that I need but make choice of a few arguments out of many, he has furniſhed his reader with, to convince you of the weakneſs of the Proteſtant cauſe on the one hand, and of the ſtrength of the Catholic doctrine on the other.

G. Before you proceed, pray let me aſk, whether the word of God alone be not the whole rule of faith? For if it be, it ſeems to follow, that ſcriptures, which are undoubtedly the word of God, are alone a full and compleat rule of Chriſtian faith.

P. Sir, as to your queſtion I anſwer, that the word of God is moſt certainly the whole rule of faith: but the conſequence you draw from it is not concluſive; becauſe it ſuppoſes that the ſcriptures alone contain the whole revealed word of God, and that the ſacred penmen have ſet down in writing every thing they taught by word of mouth: which ſuppoſition is wholly groundleſs. On the contrary it has always been the doctrine of the Catholic church, that there is an unwritten as well as written word of God, and that theſe are of equal authority, and make up together one rule of faith.

G. But are then the traditions of men of equal authority with the expreſs word of God?

P. No Sir, nothing but the word of God itſelf, can be of equal authority with the word of God: and therefore the unwritten word of God delivered to us by the tongues of men, cannot but be of equal authority with the written word of God delivered to us by the pens of men. For I preſume the apoſtles were equally men, whether they ſpoke or wrote: but ſince they were equally inſpired men, it was equally the revealed word of God, whether they delivered it by word of mouth

or

or in writing. Nay it is plain fact, firſt, that Chriſt himſelf laid the foundation of the church by preaching only: 2dly, that he never laid any command on the apoſtles to write, but only to preach the goſpel to all nations; and 3dly, that in effect they preached for ſeveral years before they wrote any of the canonical books of ſcripture: and though they had never written at all, but delivered the whole Chriſtian doctrine only by word of mouth to thoſe, who ſucceeded them in their apoſtolical charge, we ſhould have been obliged to receive it as the word of God, and therefore with the ſame reſpect, as we now do the holy ſcripture.

Whence it follows firſt, that the unwritten word of God was the whole rule of faith to the primitive Chriſtians, before the ſcriptures could poſſibly be a part of it; and it might have continued ſo for ever, if God had pleaſed to order it ſo. It follows 2dly, that ſcriptures are ſo far from being the whole neceſſary rule of the Chriſtian faith, that they are not (abſolutely ſpeaking) even a neceſſary part of that rule: as the above-ſaid author has fully proved. Poſtſcript, p. 14, 15, &c.

G. But could all neceſſary points of revealed faith have been ſafely conveyed to us, though the new Teſtament had never been written?

P. There can be no doubt of it. As for inſtance, could not the creed have been remembered in all ages, though the four evangeliſts had never committed any thing to writing?

G. Yes, but all neceſſary points of religion are not expreſſed in the creed.

P. It is true they are not. But they may be all reduced to ſo ſmall a compaſs, that they might have been tranſmitted to the moſt diſtant times and places with the ſame ſafety as the creed itſelf, by

by tradition only: and the faithful might have preſerved them in their minds and hearts, though they had never had thoſe farther lights, which the new Teſtament now furniſhes them with.

However as God has ordered things, the holy ſcriptures are without all diſpute, a moſt ineſtimable treaſure, and an infallible rule of faith when rightly underſtood. But that they are not the whole rule of faith, and that unwritten apoſtolical traditions have always been at leaſt a neceſſary part of this rule, may be clearly made out.

Firſt, From the ſcripture itſelf. For beſides that it no where declares, that all the particular points of the Chriſtian doctrine, which the apoſtles taught by word of mouth, are expreſſed in their canonical writings, it over and above recommends apoſtolical traditions in the moſt expreſs and poſitive terms. *Now I praiſe you brethren* (ſays St. Paul, 1 Cor. 11. 2.) *becauſe you remember me in all things, and keep the traditions, as I have delivered them to you.* And again, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 15. *Therefore brethren, ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions, which you have been taught, whether by word or by epiſtle.* And ſoon after 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6. he ſays, *now we command you brethren in the name of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *to withdraw yourſelves from every brother, that walks diſorderly, and not after the tradition, which he received of us.* Upon which a Proteſtant author of a book, entituled tradition neceſſary, makes the following reflection, p. 32, 33. Here, ſays he, we ſee plain mention of St. Paul's traditions, conſequently of apoſtolical traditions delivered by word of mouth as well as by epiſtles or in writing; and a condemnation of thoſe, who do not equally obſerve both.

I heartily wiſh the author may not fall under that condemnation. This however is certain, that

that the apoſtles were extremely vigilant in giving full inſtructions to thoſe they ordained, that they might alſo be able to inſtruct others. Theſe inſtructions are the ſacred depoſitum, of which St. Paul ſays to Timothy, *keep that which is committed to thy truſt*, 1 Tim. 6. 20. And again, *hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me: that good truſt, which was committed to thee, keep by the Holy Ghoſt, who dwelleth in us.* 2 Tim. 1. 13. 14. and more fully; *The things, which thou haſt heard from me before many witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who may be able to teach others alſo*, 2 Tim. 2. 2.

" Thus it is evident from ſcriptures themſelves " (ſays the abovementioned Proteſtant writer, p. " 78) that the whole of Chriſtianity, was at firſt " delivered to the biſhops ſucceeding the apoſtles " by oral tradition; and they were alſo comman- " ded to keep it, and deliver it to their ſucceſſors " in the ſame manner. Nor is it any where " found in ſcripture, by St. Paul or any other of " the apoſtles, that they would either jointly or " ſeparately write down all that they had taught " as neceſſary to ſalvation; or that they would " make ſuch a compleat canon of them, that no- " thing ſhould be neceſſary to ſalvation, but what " ſhould be found in thoſe writings."

The ſame is proved from the conſtant doctrine of the ancient fathers, who are faithful witneſſes of the doctrine of the church in their times. St. Chryſoſtom, in his third ſermon upon 2 Theſ. 2. when he comes to the 15th verſe, juſt now quoted, diſcourſes thus upon it: Hence, ſays he, it is plain, that the apoſtles did not deliver all things in writing, but many things without it: And theſe ought to be believed as much as thoſe. Let us then give credit to the tradition of the church. It is tradition, ſeek no farther.

St. Baſil,

St. Baſil, upon the ſame text of St. Paul, 2 Theſ. 2. v. 15. diſcourſes thus: Of doctrines held by the church, we have ſome in holy ſcriptures, others in an unwritten apoſtolical tradition; and both have an equal force in reference to piety. Nor will any one contradict this, who has any knowledge of church-matters. For if unwritten cuſtoms be laid aſide as things of no great authority, we ſhall ſecretly give the goſpel a mortal ſtab, or rather ſhall reduce it to an empty ſound.

This is a full confutation of thoſe, who pretend that no ceremonies are to be practiſed in the public worſhip or adminiſtration of the ſacraments, but what are clearly marked out in ſcripture: and this they call bringing religion back to its ancient purity: though in effect it is robbing it of all its outward ornaments, and ſtripping it as naked as an infant newly born.

St. Epiphanius Hær. 61. tells us in poſitive terms: that tradition alſo is neceſſary. For all things, ſays he, cannot be had from ſcripture. And therefore the apoſtles left us ſome things in writing, and others by tradition. He preſſes the ſame Hær. 75. § 8 particularly in the caſe of praying for the dead: for which there is no poſitive direction to Chriſtians in the new teſtament.

Tertullian does the ſame in reference to the ceremonies of baptiſm, of the euchariſt, the frequent uſe of the ſign of the croſs, anniverſary oblations for the dead and in honor of the martyrs. L. de corono. c. 3. Of theſe, ſays he, and other like cuſtoms, if you look for a command of Scripture, you will find none: but it will be told you, that they are authorized by tradition, confirmed by cuſtom, and obſerved by faith.

Laſtly, St. Irenæus a father of the ſecond age, ſends us expreſly to the church, and to unwritten traditions for the true ſenſe of ſcriptures "Truth,

"ſays

" ſays he, is not to be ſought for from others, " which you may have eaſily from the church, " with which the apoſtles have fully depoſited all " truth to the end that whoever deſires it, may " from her receive the living waters. For ſhe " is the door of life, but all the reſt are thieves " and robbers. We muſt therefore avoid them; " we muſt diligently purſue what belongs to the " church, and learn from her the tradition of " faith. For if the diſpute were of any little " matter, ſhould we not conſult the moſt ancient " churches, and derive our evidence from thence? " And what if the apoſtles had left us no ſcrip- " tures, muſt we not follow the rule of tradition " entruſted with them, to whom they left their " ſees? As many barbarous nations without any " books of ſcripture, yet believing in Chriſt have " ſalvation in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, and " carefully preſerve the old traditions, l. 3. c. 4."

G. Sir, you have here produced the clear teſtimony both of ſcriptures and of the ancient fathers for apoſtolical traditions. And what more can be deſired by one, who is ſincerely diſpoſed to acknowledge the truth, when it is made plain to him? But can you give me any particular inſtances of neceſſary duties, or articles of Chriſtian faith, allowed as ſuch by Proteſtants themſelves, which cannot be proved from ſcriptures, and are grounded wholly upon apoſtolical traditions?

P. I could produce a conſiderable number: but to avoid being tedious, I ſhall make choice only of three, allowed of, as you deſire, by Proteſtants themſelves. 1. The obſervance of the Chriſtian ſabbath againſt Jews and Sabbatarians. 2. Validity of infant baptiſm and anabaptiſts. And 3dly, the validity of baptiſm adminiſtered by hereticks againſt the donatiſts. In which three points

points there is no difference between the Proteſtant churches and us. I ſhall touch briefly upon each.

Firſt then, There is no text in ſcripture commanding the Sunday, that is the firſt day of the week to be kept holy; as there is moſt certainly one, which appoints the Saturday or laſt day of the week for the ſabbath, or day of reſt, Exod. 20. v. 8. And yet the keeping of Sunday excluſively of the Saturday, is a duty indiſpenſably obliging all Chriſtians. Proteſtants therefore, as well as Roman Catholics are under a neceſſity of having recourſe to apoſtolical tradition to juſtify this remarkable change in ſetting aſide the Saturday, and ſubſtituting the Sunday inſtead of it. For nothing elſe can poſſible be alledged to authorize either the obligation, or even the lawfulneſs, of this practice.

2dly, Proteſtants hold, as we do, the validity of infant baptiſm. Yet it is not authorized by any one plain text of ſcripture, nor have we any thing for it but the authority of apoſtolical tradition; though it be a point of ſuch importance, that the ſalvation of millions of ſouls depends upon it. The cuſtom, ſays St. Auſtin, which our mother the church has of baptizing infants is not to be ſlighted, nor thought ſuperfluous in any manner: Nor ought it to believed, were it not an apoſtolical tradition. L. 10. de Gen. ad Lit. C. 23. He therefore was convinced, that there was no ſcriptural text for it: For if there had been any, there would have been an obligation of believing it upon the teſtimony of ſcriptures.

3dly. The validity of baptiſm adminiſtred by hereticks is likewiſe owned by Proteſtants. It was the ſubject of the diſpute between St. Cyprian and pope Stephen, and afterwards between the Donatiſts and the Catholic church. But St. Auguſtin, who

who drew his learned pen in defence of the Catholic cauſe againſt thoſe hereticks, owned frankly that it could not be decided by plain ſcripture; but that after the death of St. Cyprian, the church had interpoſed her authority in the council of Arles, and determined the matter by the infallible rule of apoſtolical tradition. St. Auguſtin's words are remarkable. Of this, ſays he, the apoſtles have left us no direction in writing. But the cuſtom, which was objected againſt St. Cyprian muſt be believed to have begun by tradition from them. As there are many things, which are held by the whole church, and are therefore rightly believed to have been ordered by the apoſtles, although they be not found in ſcripture. l. 5. de bapt. contra Don. c. 23.

How different is the doctrine of this learned champion of the church from that of the 6th Proteſtant article of religion? By which it is declared that holy ſcripture containeth all things neceſſary to ſalvation: ſo that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to ſalvation.

G. What! Is that the doctrine of the 6th Proteſtant article of religion! If it be, I am ſure the church of England is incoherent with herſelf. For does ſhe not require of any man to believe the indiſpenſable obligation of obſerving the Chriſtian ſabbath? And where is that read in ſcripture, or how can it be proved thereby? Again, does ſhe not require of all true Proteſtants to believe the validity of infant-baptiſm, and that this ſacrament is validly adminiſtered by hereticks? Or does ſhe require of them to believe both the one and the other, without judging the belief of them neceſſary to ſalvation? That would be ſtrange indeed. It

follows

follows therefore that ſhe requires the belief of ſome articles of faith, as neceſſary to ſalvation, which cannot be read in ſcripture, nor proved thereby: unleſs ſhe has perhaps made ſome new diſcovery of ſcriptural texts, which the great St. Auguſtin knew nothing of.

P. That might be probable, if ſcriptures, like the golden mines of Peru, had lain hid under ground in former ages. But that a perſon ſo deeply read in thoſe ſacred writings, as St. Auſtin was, who ſtudied them day and night, in order to employ them againſt the enemies of truth, ſhould be ignorant of ſuch texts, if there were any, is altogether improbable.

But there is another remarkable incoherency in the ſame 6th article: for it goes on thus. By holy ſcriptures we underſtand thoſe canonical books of the old and new teſtament, of whoſe authority was never any doubt in the church. Now I preſume the belief of the canonical books both of the old and new teſtament is required by the church of England, as an article of faith neceſſary to ſalvation: unleſs ſhe will allow ſalvation to perſons, who deny any part of the word of God, when it is declared to them, that it is the word of God, by ſufficient authority. And yet the above-ſaid article refers us to the judgment of the church, and not to ſcriptures themſelves (which indeed would be abſurd) to learn what books are canonical: to wit, thoſe of whoſe authority there never was any doubt in the church: and what is this but making tradition the only rule of diſtinguiſhing between inſpired and uninſpired writings? That is, the only rule of a very important article of Chriſtian faith.

I ſay nothing of the groſs miſtake implied in theſe laſt words of the aboveſaid article; to wit, of whoſe authority was never any doubt in the church.

church. For both the book of Eſther in the old teſtament, and ſeveral parts of the new teſtament, allowed by the church of England for canonical, were doubted of by eminent men in the church even till the end of the 4th. century: about which time the canon both of the old and new teſtament was after the moſt diligent examination ſettled upon the ſame footing, as it has been ſince by the council of Trent.

SECT. 7.

Of SCRIPTURES, and CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

G. BUT how comes it, that the Proteſtant churches appear to be ſo zealous for the ſcriptures, and at the ſame time have ſo little regard to church-authority? Since without that authority we ſhould not even be ſure of the ſcriptures themſelves.

P. It is very hard to give a reaſon for the proceedings of men, when they are once engaged in an unreaſonable cauſe: for they uſually approve or reject, cry up or run down things, not by a ſteady principle of reaſon, but as they appear favourable or unfavourable to the intereſt they have eſpouſed. I ſhall inſtance in the very points you have now mentioned. The reformed churches, as you obſerve, affect a wonderful zeal for ſcriptures, and pretend to make them the whole rule of their faith. And would not any one now imagine to find them the moſt zealous people in the world for every thing the ſcriptures recommend?

G. I ſhould really think ſo.

P. But, Sir, it is not a Proteſtant virtue to ſpeak or act coherently in religious matters. You have already had ſome ſpecimens of their true zeal for ſcriptures, in rejecting the doctrines of

of infallibility and oral tradition, though eſtabliſhed by ſuch clear and ſtrong ſcriptural texts, as fully convinced the ancient fathers of the truth of thoſe two important points. I ſhall now give you another ſpecimen of it in their oppoſition to church-authority, though it has likewiſe the plaineſt teſtimonies of ſcriptures to recommend it. For firſt, it is plain from ſcripture, that the church has her eſtabliſhment from Chriſt himſelf. *Upon this rock I will build my church*: ſays Chriſt, Math. 16. v. 16. He therefore was the builder or founder of it; which alone gives her an authority ſuperior to all ſocieties upon earth.

2dly, She has her commiſſion of teaching immediately from the ſame divine perſon. All power in Heaven and on earth (ſays he) is given unto me. This is the preamble: and it gives the greateſt weight and authority poſſible to the commiſſion delivered in the following words. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations*, Math. 28. v. 18, 19. But leſt it ſhould be imagined that the commiſſion he then gave was to expire with the apoſtles, he immediately added, *and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world*, v. 20. which cannot be underſtood otherwiſe than of the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles in all ages. This then again makes the church's authority, in determining matters relating to the Chriſtian doctrine, the greateſt upon earth; becauſe he has promiſed to abide, that is, to continue teaching with her even unto the end of the world. Hence he has pronounced this terrible ſentence, againſt any man that refuſes to ſubmit to her deciſions, to wit, *that he ſhall be reputed as a heathen and a publican*, Math. 18. v. 17. that is, as one in a damnable ſtate. Nay our bleſſed ſaviour appears to be ſo zealous for the authority of his future church, in the perſons of his miniſters, that he ſeems to make no diffe-

rence between their authority and his own. *As my father ſent me, ſo do I ſend you*, Joh. 20. v. 21. And again, *he that hears you hears me, and he that deſpiſes you deſpiſes me*, Luke 10. 16.

St. Paul, the faithful apoſtle of Chriſt, and interpreter of his doctrines, takes all occaſions to eſtabliſh the church's authority in the perſons of her miniſters appointed by Chriſt to be our guides in ſpirituals. When he was upon his voyage to Jeruſalem, he aſſembled the clergy of Epheſus, and ſpoke thus to them. *Take heed therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt has made you overſeers, to feed* (or *govern*) *the church of God which he has purchaſed with his blood*, Acts 20. v. 28. Now feeding and being fed, governing and being governed have a reciprocal relation: and the ſame divine authority which gives the power of governing to the paſtors of the church, requires ſubmiſſion and obedience of their flock. Upon this principle St. Paul in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, inſtructs them in the important leſſon of ſubmiſſion to their ſpiritual guides. *Obey them*, ſays he, *that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves*, Heb. 13. v. 17. and ſpeaking of the ſame guides, he commands the Hebrews to *follow their faith*, v. 7.

The ſame apoſtle in his epiſtle to the Epheſians tells us, that Chriſt beſides apoſtles and evangeliſts, *has given to his church paſtors and teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the building up of the body of Chriſt, till we all meet in the unity of faith——that we be no more children wavering, and carried to and fro, with every blaſt of doctrine in the uncertainties of men, and their crafty contrivances to deceive.* Eph. 4. v. 11, 12, 13, 14. Here then we are taught firſt that the paſtors

tors of the church are appointed by God to be our guides in faith, and that he has eſtabliſhed this method for the uniting all men in one and the ſame belief; to the end that we be not like children wavering and carried to and fro with every blaſt of doctrine. We are taught 2dly, that theſe guides ſhall continue in the church of Chriſt, without ceaſing, till we all come to the unity of faith: that is, to the end of the world; and that by conſequence in all controverſies of religion it belongs to theſe guides to fix the wavering judgments of the people, againſt all the uncertainties of men, and the wicked arts of impoſtors and ſeducers.

Thus it is manifeſt, that the authority of the church in her paſtors is eſtabliſhed by the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt texts of ſcripture. And what judgment muſt we then make of the ſincerity of the firſt reformers, who whilſt they pretended to make ſcripture their only rule, acted openly againſt that very rule by rejecting the authority, it ſo expreſsly recommends? Truly we cannot rationally form any other judgment, than that all their ſhew of zeal for ſcriptures and the word of God, which was the univerſal cry in the beginning of the reformation, was no more than a mere theatrical farce to amuſe the ignorant populace, and a cloak to cover their premeditated deſign of ſubverting the whole frame of church-government, which Chriſt had eſtabliſhed; of bringing the guides of God's appointment into contempt, and dreſſing up the idols of their own imaginations with the ſpecious gloſſes of ſcriptural texts wreſted from the ſenſe intended by the Holy Ghoſt.

G. But are not the firſt reformers and their followers as poſitively condemned by their own rule, I mean, the ſcriptures, as by the authority of the Catholic church? And why then have they ſo

great a ſpleen againſt the one, and ſhew ſo great a reſpect for the other?

P. The reaſon in ſhort is, becauſe the church is ſomewhat harder to be managed than the ſcriptures. You ſhall hear what anſwer the author of the rule of faith gives to it, p. 178, 179. "Every one (ſays he) ſees, that he can give what "ſenſe he pleaſes to a writing, which is obſcure "in ſeveral points relating to conſcience and religion.' So that an infallible rule (as ſcriptures doubtleſs are when rightly underſtood) "without an infallible interpreter, puts little or no "reſtraint upon many unwarrantable paſſions, "prejudices, and opinions, of which a great part "of mankind is generally too fond. But an infallible interpreter (meaning the church) is not "ſo tame. He will not ſuffer his ſentence to be "wreſted againſt his meaning. If they miſconſtrue his words, he will ſtill ſpeak plainer, and "confute their doubts."

Here then lies the whole ſecret. The dead letter of ſcriptures cannot ſpeak for itſelf; and though it be ever ſo much put to the torture, it cannot complain, nor make any farther diſcoveries, nor give us any farther lights, than the ſacred penmen, thought fit to communicate to us in their writings. But the church is a living judge always in being: ſo that if her decrees be called in queſtion, ſhe can exert her power, and ſtand up in defence of them. if her words be miſinterpreted, ſhe is a living interpreter, and can do herſelf juſtice by explaining her own true meaning. It is therefore obvious to common ſenſe, why the leaders of the reformation hated the church, and appealed from her authority to the dead letter of the ſcripture. They hated the church as criminals hate the judge, by whom they are ſure to be condemned; and their appeal-

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ing to their own private judgment, where they were as ſafe as they could wiſh. For what criminal would fear to appear before a tribunal, where himſelf ſits as judge and interpreter of the law, by which he is to be tried? And indeed the world ſoon ſaw the fruit of their politic zeal for ſcriptures. For in a very ſhort time it ſtocked Chriſtendom with as many religions, as there were anciently deities amongſt the heathens. The written word of God being wreſted out of the hands of its only lawful interpreter the Catholic church, and ſeized on by theſe uſurping intruders, was ſo dexterouſly managed by them, that like the pagan oracles of old, it was made to ſpeak juſt what they pleaſed; and there was nothing ſo impious or abſurd, which was not found plain in ſcripture, when it ſuited with their prejudices or paſſions to find it ſo.

Thus Martin Luther, Carolſtadius, Oecolampadius, Bucer, and other apoſtate prieſts and monks, found it plain in ſcripture, that ſolemn vows of chaſtity made to God were not binding. Thus the ſame Martin Luther found it no leſs plain in ſcripture, that freewill is but an empty name. Tom. 2. fol. 3. 2. Thus Calvin likewiſe found it plain in ſcripture that God is the author of ſin. That all the children of the faithful, whether baptized or unbaptized, are in the number of the elect; and that a perſon once juſtified can never loſe the grace of adoption, though he ſhould fall into the moſt enormous crimes. Hiſt. des Variat. L. 9. p. 351, 352. &c. which laſt abominable doctrine is expreſsly defined in the ſynod of Dort. Hiſt. des Variat. L. 14. p. 41, 42. And yet this true Proteſtant ſynod, to which the church of England as well as other reformed churches, ſent their repreſentatives, and to the decrees whereof they all ſubſcribed, pretending to decide every thing by

the plain word of God. Such impious errors does God permit men to fall into, when they caſt off the authority, he has appointed to be their guide, and ſet up their own private judgments to be the interpreters of his ſacred word.

Thus again by the ſame deluſion juſtly permitted by God, three of the head patriarchs of the reformation, to wit, Luther, Calvin, and Zuinglius, ran into three diſagreeing ſyſtems relating to the ſacrament of the holy euchariſt; and all three pretended to have the ſacred text moſt evidently on their ſide; nay and continue in the ſame contradictory pretentions to this day. "To a "Zuinglian (ſays the author of the rule of faith, "p. 26, 27.) it is wonderfully plain from ſcrip- "ture, that there is nothing received in the ſa- "crament but bread and wine. To a Calvaniſt "it is infinitely plainer, that Zuinglius is miſtaken, "and that the true body and blood of Chriſt are "actually preſent, not indeed to the ſacrament, "but to the worthy receiver. But Luther tells us, "that his brother reformers are a couple of aſſes; "that they have learnt their doctrine from the "Devil; and that we muſt either charge a lie upon "the Holy Ghoſt, or confeſs that the ſacred body "and blood of Chriſt, are truly and really preſent "to the ſacrament itſelf, as well as to the receiver. "Serm. de Sacr. An. 1527."

Thus finally the ſcriptures, as managed by the Proteſtant churches, are to this very day plain and poſitive for Lutheraniſm in Germany, for Calviniſm at Geneva, for Zuinglianiſm in Switzerland, for Wicliffiſm and Huſſitiſm in Bohemia; and in the dominions of Great Britain, not only parliamentary Proteſtantiſm, but Preſbyterianiſm, Anabaptiſm, Quakeriſm, and Socinianiſm, beſides numberleſs other fanaticiſms of leſs note, have all plain ſcriptures on their ſide.

I conclude

I conclude in the whole, that ſcriptures alone are ſo far from being a full and compleat rule of Chriſtian faith, that they even are no rule at all, at leaſt in any doubtful or diſputed caſe, unleſs they be interpreted by that authority, which Chriſt has eſtabliſhed upon earth to be our guide, and to which he has promiſed his perpetual aſſiſtance. For if they be left to the arbitrary and precarious interpretation of every man's private judgment, inſtead of being a means to unite men in the ſame faith, they muſt unavoidably be the very apple of diſcord, and a ſource of endleſs diſputes: as is manifeſt not only from the few inſtances I have produced, but from the whole hiſtory of the reformation from end to end: which will be an everlaſting unanſwerable proof, that ſcriptures read without the ſubmiſſion and deference, which is due to the guides appointed by God to lead us into the true meaning of them, have been the cauſe of all the diſputes, that have divided whole Chriſtendom theſe two hundred laſt years, but never put an end to any. For how can that be a proper means to end diſputes, which in all controverſies, that are to be decided by ſcriptures, is itſelf the principle ſubject of the diſpute? All indeed agree that there are ſuch and ſuch words in ſcripture; but ſince it is the ſenſe and not the ſound of words, which is the rule of faith, and the whole quarrel is about the ſenſe, it is impoſſible the contending parties ſhould come to an agreement, unleſs they ſacrifice their own private judgments, and ſubmit to a tribunal, from which there is no appeal.

G. It is indeed but obvious to common ſenſe, that the thing which is itſelf the ſubject of the quarrel, cannot by itſelf alone end it. So that unleſs it be referred to the deciſion of a judge duly qualified, the diſpute will laſt till doom's day.

P. Suppoſe there were a nation, that ſhould give full liberty to every one to interpret its laws by his own private judgment, would it be poſſible in that caſe either to condemn any criminal, or put an end to any law-ſuit? Nay would not anarchy and confuſion be the unavoidable conſequence of it? The matter will not bear a diſpute. And therefore there is not a civilized nation in the world, but has a ſupreme tribunal eſtabliſhed, from which there is no appeal. Now this ſupreme tribunal in matters relating to faith and worſhip is the Catholic church, which St. Paul calls the *pillar and ground of the truth.* 1 Tim. 3. v. 15. whoſe deciſions our bleſſed Saviour commands us to ſubmit to under pain of being regarded by him as *heathens* and *publicans.* Math. 18. v. 17. and with the paſtors whereof he has promiſed to abide for ever; in order to encourage us to rely upon their judgment with an entire repoſe of mind.

SECT. 8.

A Recapitulation of the foregoing Sections.

BUT I have now done with the general grounds of the Catholic faith, which I have laid before you as briefly as the matter would permit. However, if it will not tire your patience, before we break up this conference, I will ſum up in ſhort the chief heads of what I have ſaid with ſome reflections upon it, that you may have a clear ſight of them at once, and for your farther ſatisfaction examine them more fully at your leiſure.

G. Sir, I ſhall liſten to you not only with patience but pleaſure.

P. This I am ſure of, that they will ſtand the teſt of the ſtricteſt examination; and the more they

they are conſidered, the more they will convince you, that the church, in which alone the Catholic faith is taught, is built upon the ſtrongeſt foundations.

Chriſt himſelf is both it's founder and it's chief corner ſtone: it's law giver, ſupreme inviſible head, and perpetual protector. He laid the firſt foundations of it by perſonally preaching the word of life for three whole years. When he was at the eve of his departure out of this world, he comforted his apoſtles with a promiſe of ſending down to them the Holy Ghoſt, who *ſhould guide them into all truth*, Joh. 16. v. 13. and *bring all things to their remembrance, whatever he had ſaid unto them*, Joh. 14. v. 26. Some time after his reſurrection he committed the charge of his whole flock in a ſpecial manner to St. Peter, Joh. 21. v. 15, &c. and by that eſtabliſhed the form of government, which was ever after to be inviolably obſerved in his church. A little before his aſcenſion into Heaven, he gave his apoſtles their commiſſion to *go and teach all nations*, which he accompanied with a promiſe of *abiding with them to the end of the world*, Math. 28. v. 20.

The 10th day after his aſcenſion, the promiſed Spirit of truth deſcended viſibly on the apoſtles, who thereupon began immediately the exerciſe of their apoſtolical miniſtry, and that with ſuch an aſtoniſhing ſucceſs, that in a very ſhort time a numerous church was formed at Jeruſalem, and a few years after the goſpel was preached to the remoteſt parts of the world; as is atteſted by St. Paul in his epiſtle to the Romans, C. 1. v. 8. which was written but fifteen years after St. Peter's coming to Rome. Now it cannot ſurely be doubted, but that this ſtupendous ſucceſs was much more owing to the hand of God, than to any concurrence of natural cauſes. As, for ex-

ample, it was not humanly poſſible, that three thouſand men, ſhould by hearing a plain and ſhort diſcourſe uttered by an obſcure perſon, be in a moment prevailed upon to embrace a religion unheard of before, and the moſt ſeemingly contrary to reaſon; unleſs a ſupernatural power had come in to his aſſiſtance, and given a ſtrength to his words above all the force that human eloquence was ever capable of: yet the fact is recorded by one, who had it from thoſe that were eye-witneſſes of it. Neither was it, morally ſpeaking, poſſible, that a world drowned in ſenſuality and idolatrous ſuperſtitions, ſhould be perſuaded to renounce both the one and the other by the preaching of a few men deſtitute of all worldly advantages, unleſs almighty God had eſpouſed the religion they preached as his own cauſe, and given a powerful bleſſing to their apoſtolical labours: So that it is manifeſt, that the doctrine they taught came from Heaven, and had the divine approbation ſtamped upon it in the cleareſt characters.

As the number of the faithful encreaſed, the apoſtles took care to provide them with a proportionable ſupply of paſtors, who being likewiſe veſted with a power of ordaining others, might by a kind of ſpiritual generation preſerve the ſucceſſion of the prelatic and prieſtly order: By which alone the church of Chriſt was to be governed in all ages. But the perpetuating of the prieſthood of Chriſt was not their only concern: that of perpetuating his ſacred doctrine was of no leſs importance. They therefore ſpared no pains to inſtruct thoroughly thoſe, they had ordained, in all the holy myſteries of Chriſtian religion, and carefully depoſited with them all the ſacred truths, which God had revealed unto them; that they might thereby be enabled to communicate

cate them to their ſucceſſors, and they again tranſmit them to theirs; in order to have them ſecurely conveyed down from paſtor to paſtor, in all ſucceeding ages.

In this manner were the foundations of the church of Chriſt fully perfected, and the ſuperſtructure itſelf conſiderably advanced by the apoſtles themſelves. And ſince they followed faithfully in all things the directions of their heavenly Maſter, it is plain, that whether we conſider it's origin, it's eſtabliſhment and conſtitution, or the ſacredneſs of it's laws and doctrine, every thing in it is wholly divine, and ſavours nothing of human invention.

This church has ever ſince it's eſtabliſhment, been the nurſery of innumerable eminent ſaints of both ſexes, and of all ages and conditions; the ſanctuary of repenting ſinners, the ſchool of learning, and the faithful depoſitory of all the ſacred myſteries of ſaving faith.

This church has, by the luſtre of her miracles, the exemplary holineſs of her children, the decency and majeſty of her public worſhip, and the purity of her morals, ſubdued the greateſt monarchs upon earth, and extended her conqueſts even beyond the fartheſt bounds of the Roman empire.

Finally, this church has now already had a viſible being for the ſpace of above ſeventeen hundred years; and can ſhew in her own communion an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of biſhops and paſtors from the apoſtles down to this very time; in ſpite of all the powers of darkneſs, that have from time to time combined together to deſtroy it. Nay, for the firſt three hundred years ſhe ſtood her ground not only againſt the unwearied malice of the Jews, but againſt the whole power of the pagan emperors of Rome: And the large

effuſion of Chriſtian blood during the ten general perſecutions, inſtead of weakening Chriſtianity, only gave it a greater luſtre in the glorious triumphs of it's martyrs, whoſe invincible courage and conſtancy, amidſt the moſt cruel torments, not only drew upon them the admiration of heathens themſelves, but converted many thouſands of them to the faith of Chriſt. So that the powerful hand of God appeared viſibly in turning the very means intended for the utter ruin of the church, into an occaſion of it's greater encreaſe.

Now all theſe conſiderations put together prove invincibly that the church of Chriſt, though conſidered barely as ſuch, that is without any regard to the repeated promiſes of infallibility made to her, is the moſt illuſtrious body, or ſociety of men upon earth: and that her teſtimony in religious matters has a weight and authority which cannot be equalled by any other, that is purely human. For what is properly the teſtimony of the church of Chriſt? It is the teſtimony of a ſtanding viſible body, or ſociety of men, whereof Chriſt himſelf is the ſupreme inviſible head, and which he has entruſted with all the ſacred myſteries of ſaving faith. It is the teſtimony of millions in every age ſince it's eſtabliſhment; who therefore could not poſſibly combine together to deceive one another even in any matter of importance, much leſs to cheat one another into a religion directly oppoſite to all the inclinations of nature, which promiſed indeed ineſtimable rewards in the life to come, but propoſed nothing but croſſes, ſelf-denials, and perſecutions in this world. It is the teſtimony not of a rabble conſiderable only for it's numbers, but of the wiſeſt, the greateſt, the moſt learned, and beſt of men in all ages, and in all nations of the univerſe. A teſtimony confirmed

firmed by thouſands of unconteſtable miracles, and ſealed with the blood of many thouſand illuſtrious martyrs. Finally a teſtimony, which was not extorted by violence or force of arms, but which all came into by a free and voluntary conſent, and upon a full conviction of conſcience, that the doctrine preached to them was the word of eternal life.

It being therefore manifeſt, that the teſtimony of the church of Chriſt, though conſidered barely as an illuſtrious ſociety, has in all religious matters a weight and authority, which cannot be equalled by any other, that is purely human, it follows, that it gives us the greateſt moral evidence or certainty, we can poſſibly have of the truth of any doctrinal point atteſted by her; and that, by conſequence, our belief even of the darkeſt and ſublimeſt myſteries, declared by her to be revealed truths, is perfectly rational: becauſe nothing can be more rational, than to believe a thing, of the truth whereof we have the greateſt moral evidence or certainty poſſible. Nay if this be not rational, we might rationally doubt even of the beſt atteſted hiſtorical facts, and believe nothing, but what we are ſure we ſee with our own eyes: which is moſt highly abſurd.

Now it is upon the authority of this teſtimony of the church of Chriſt, that we receive ſcriptures and apoſtolical traditions as the written and unwritten word of God: which therefore we regard as an infallible and compleat rule of Chriſtian faith: ſo that whatever we believe upon their authority, whether jointly or ſeparately, we believe upon the teſtimony of God himſelf; which alone is the proper and eſſential motive of that divine faith, by means whereof we have not barely a moral, but an infallible certainty of the truth of every thing, we believe upon that teſtimony.

Hence

Hence it is (as I have before obſerved to you) that our faith is both divine and rational. It is divine in being built upon the teſtimony of God as it's only proper and eſſential motive; and it is rational in relying upon the church's authority, for the conveyance of the divine teſtimony truly and credibly to us. For how ſhould we know, what truths God has effectually revealed, what not, but from the teſtimony of that church, which the apoſtles themſelves entruſted with all the ſacred myſteries revealed to them? And ſo, although our faith, which comes by hearing, depends indeed upon the teſtimony of men as a neceſſary condition for the ſecure conveyance of thoſe myſteries to us, that teſtimony is no part of the eſſential motive of our belief of them; which relies wholly and ſolely upon the word of God, whether written or unwritten. In a word, the church informs us what truths God has revealed, and we believe them purely becauſe he has revealed them.

It is upon this ſolid foundation, that our belief of the church's infallibility is grounded, to wit, the infallible promiſes of God recorded in holy writ: by which we are aſſured, that the Spirit of Truth ſhall abide with his church for ever, and lead her into all truth: and that therefore the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt her. This renders the church of Chriſt not only a ſafe but infallible guide in all matters appertaining to ſalvation. This renders her incapable of miſleading us into errors deſtructive to the ſaving faith once delivered to the ſaints: that is, to the faith revealed to the apoſtles, and by them depoſited as a ſacred truſt with their ſucceſſors. This finally renders her incapable either of demanding of her children any terms of communion, which are diſpleaſing to God, or of impoſing on any doctrines for revealed truths, but what were at firſt

delivered

delivered for ſuch by the apoſtles themſelves either in writing, or by word of mouth; as has been fully ſhewed.

Thus has the divine goodneſs provided both an infallible rule, to wit, his own ſacred word, and an infallible guide, to wit, his holy church for the ſecurity of the Catholic faith. An infallible rule, to be the meaſure and ſtandard of revealed truth; and an infallible guide, to explain the true meaning of it. And muſt not they then be very fond of going aſtray, who pretending to follow the rule, deſtroy it in effect, by abandoning the guide, whom God has appointed to be the infallible interpreter of it? Nay though Chriſt had made no promiſe to his church of a perpetual infallibility, nothing but a preſumption to a degree of madneſs, could prompt a man to oppoſe his private judgment to the ſolemn deciſions of ſuch an illuſtrious body or ſociety of men, as the church of Chriſt would nevertheleſs have been. But not to acquieſce to her definitive ſentence, after all the divine promiſes made to her of a perpetual protection and aſſiſtance, is not only the height of madneſs, but of impiety, and a barefaced contempt of God himſelf.

G. Sir, you have given me a full and clear idea of the authority of the church of Chriſt, whether conſidered as an illuſtrious ſociety, or as ſhe is the pillar and ſupport of the truth by virtue of the promiſes of a perpetual infallibility made to her. You have likewiſe fully convinced me, that ſcriptures, though infallible in themſelves, cannot be a rule of faith in any obſcure or controverted point, unleſs this church be our guide, and interpreter of the true meaning of them. But ſince there are a great number of churches, all differing from one another, and all pretending to be the true

true church of Chriſt, how is this church to be found? Or by what diſtinguiſhing marks muſt I know her?

P. A full anſwer to this queſtion, will require more time than we have at preſent. So let us leave it to ſome other meeting.

G. With all my heart: for I deſire to be thoroughly ſatisfied in it.

The End of the firſt Dialogue.

THE

THE SECOND DIALOGUE,

CONTAINING

A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

CONVERSION OF THE BRITONS AND SAXONS;

WITH PROOFS OF THEIR

AGREEMENT IN FAITH,

AND SOME REMARKS UPON CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE

CONVERSION OF THE SAXONS.

SECT. I.

The Importance of enquiring into the MARKS of the TRUE CHURCH of CHRIST, in which alone Salvation is proved to be possible.

G. BEING already fully convinced (as I told you at our last meeting) that I am bound to take the church of Christ for my guide, in all matters, wherein religion is concerned, I desire now to be informed, by what means this church may be securely found amidst the great number of churches, which though all differing from one another, pretend all to be the true church of Christ. For unless this point be made clear to me, I may as easily be mistaken in the choice of my religion, as travellers in an unknown country often are in the choice of their road, when there is no mark set up to direct them. But pray, Sir, is not every particular Christian church a part of the true church of Christ?

P. Sir,

P. Sir, every particular Chriſtian church, in what part ſoever of the world it be, if it be united in communion with the Catholic church, is a part of the true church of Chriſt: but if it be ſeparated by hereſy or ſchiſm from the communion of the Catholic church, it is no part of the true church of Chriſt.

G. You make then a large difference between Catholic and Chriſtian?

P. I do ſo. For though all Catholics are Chriſtians, all Chriſtians are not Catholics: becauſe there are heretical and ſchiſmatical, as well as Catholic Chriſtians. And the creed does not ſay, I believe the Chriſtian, but I believe the holy Catholic church.

But as to the thing you are in ſearch of, and deſire to be ſatisfied in, it leads us directly to the examination of a point of the greateſt importance; to wit, how the true church of Chriſt may be found? And by what diſtinguiſhing marks you may know her, in order to make a right choice of the religion you are to live and die in? This, Sir, is an enquiry truly becoming a Chriſtian, what ſtate or condition ſoever the divine providence has placed him in. Many take a great deal of pains to fill their heads with vain curioſities and ſpeculations, which are of no conſequence, whether they be true or falſe. Others make it their whole ſtudy to improve their fortune in this world, and let the other take its chance, as if it were a trifle beneath their concern. But, alas, what will it avail a man to be at his eaſe during the ſhort courſe of this life, to be advanced to honours, or wallow in riches, if after all he loſes his ſoul?

Now every man's eternal happineſs or miſery has ſo cloſe a connection with the choice he makes of his religion, that as on the one hand, he

he puts himſelf moſt certainly into the true way to ſalvation, if he makes a right choice: ſo on the other it is no leſs certain, that he enters into the high road to perdition, if either ſloth, indifference, or intereſt prevails upon him to make a wrong one. He may indeed have wealth and grandeur, he may have liberty and eaſe, and in a word he may have every thing but ſalvation out of the true church of Chriſt.

St. Auguſtin is poſitive in this matter. For writing to Donatus, Epiſt. 204, he addreſſes himſelf to him, in the following words. Being out of the pale of the church thou wouldſt not eſcape damnation, though thou ſhouldſt be burnt alive for confeſſing the name of Chriſt. And he is ſeconded by St. Fulgentius, ſaying, neither baptiſm nor liberal alms, nor death itſelf can avail a man any thing in order to ſalvation, if he does not hold the unity of the Catholic church. C. 39. ad Petrum Damianum. And both theſe fathers have but copied after their predeceſſor St. Cyprian, who in his treatiſe of the unity of the church declares, that whoever, leaving the church, cleaves to an adultreſs, is cut off from having any ſhare in the promiſes made to the church. And again, If it was poſſible for any to eſcape that were not in the ark of Noah, it will likewiſe be poſſible for him to eſcape, who is not in the church. And this was the conſtant and uniform doctrine of the ancient fathers, when they wrote againſt the hereticks and ſchiſmaticks of their times.

G. It ſeems then that theſe ancient Fathers differed very much in their judgment from many of our modern Proteſtants, who value themſelves highly for their extenſive charity in allowing a poſſibility of ſalvation to all Chriſtians, whatever church or communion they are of, ſo they lead but moral lives, and wrong nobody.

P. Nay

P. Nay ſome (as Mr. Leſly by name) extends this their pretended charity even to heathens and Mahometans; who, according to that author, may be ſaved by an uncovenanted mercy. But St. Paul, from whom the ancient fathers drew their doctrine, was an utter ſtranger to it. For he lays his curſe even upon an angel from Heaven, *if he ſhould preach any other goſpel*, or faith, *than that which he himſelf had preached*, Gal. 1. v. 8.

The ſame apoſtle tells us, that as we are called to *one hope*, *one Lord*, and *one baptiſm*, ſo to *one faith*, Eph. 4. v. 4. and he aſſures us likewiſe, that *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*. Heb. 11. v. 6. Now theſe two texts joined together make up a demonſtrative proof that there is but one church or communion, in which ſalvation is poſſible. For if there be but one faith (and who can doubt it?) It follows, that amongſt the many churches, which all teach different faiths, there can be but one, which teaches the faith, St. Paul ſpeaks of, which is undoubtedly the true one. And ſince the true faith can only be found in the true church of Chriſt, and we are aſſured by the ſame apoſtle, that without this faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, the conſequence is, that unleſs we be members of this church, we cannot be pleaſing to him. And can ſalvation be poſſible to thoſe, who live and die in a ſtate, wherein they are diſpleaſing to God?

But I cannot here forbear reciting, the excellent words of Dr. Pearſon upon this ſubject. "We "read, ſays he, that at the firſt *the Lord added* "*to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*, Act. "2. v. 47. and what was then daily done, has "been done ſince continually. Chriſt never "appointed two ways to Heaven; nor did "he build a church to ſave ſome, and make "another inſtitution for other men's ſalvation.

"*There*

" *There is no other name under Heaven given among* " *men, whereby we muſt be ſaved, but the name* " *of Jeſus.* Act. 4. v. 12. And that name " is no otherwiſe given under Heaven than in " the church. As none were ſaved from the " deluge, but ſuch as were in the ark of Noah " framed for their reception by the hand of God: " as none of the firſt-born of Egypt lived but " ſuch as were within thoſe habitations, whoſe " door-poſts were ſprinkled with blood by the " appointment of God for their preſervation: " as none of the inhabitants of Jerico could " eſcape the fire and ſword, but ſuch as were " within the houſe of Rahab, for whoſe pro- " tection a covenant was made, ſo none ſhall " ever eſcape the eternal wrath of God, who " belong not to the church of God, p. 349 " 359."

All this is perfectly conformable to the ſenſe of ſcriptures and apoſtolical tradition.

G. Surely this learned Proteſtant biſhop had a full conviction of conſcience, that he was a member of the true church of Chriſt, when he wrote this piece. For it is plain on the one hand, that he was no latitudinarian by principle, like the gentleman you mentioned juſt now: and we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe on the other, that being fully convinced in his judgment of the impoſſibility of ſalvation out of the true church of Chriſt, he would under this conviction continue a member of the church of England, unleſs he judged at the ſame time, that the church of England was a part of the true church of Chriſt.

P. Sir, as to the real conviction of his conſcience, we muſt leave that to the great ſearcher of hearts. But this we are ſure of, that an erroneous conſcience may eaſily be formed, when it is under the direction of any wordly intereſt or paſſion

paſſion prevailing in the ſoul. We are likewiſe very ſure, that the powerful charms of liberty and eaſe, have lulled the conſciences of many thouſands ſo faſt aſleep, that they never awaked till death opened their eyes, and put it out of their power to deceive themſelves any longer. Nor do we want examples of thoſe, whoſe hearts reſiſt, when their judgments are ſubdued; as the humble St. Auguſtin accuſes himſelf in his confeſſions: where he frankly owns, that his will rebelled ſeveral years after his underſtanding was fully convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion. And who will be a voucher for the learned Proteſtant biſhop we ſpeak of, that he was above this weakneſs? The honourable character of a biſhop, is not exchanged without great reluctance for an obſcure ſtation, attended with reproach and contempt: and the revenues annexed to it are a moſt powerful perſuaſive againſt Popery, on this ſide of the ſeas, where the biſhop's lady with her dear children taſte the ſweets of the eaſy income of her ſpiritual lord, and employs her beſt rhetoric to convince his lordſhip, that ſtate and plenty are much more delightful things than evangelical poverty. Which alone ſuffices to ſtifle the beſt thoughts, and render the beſt diſpoſitions towards a change ineffectual.

But let that be as it will, you plainly ſee of what importance it is not to make a falſe ſtep in the choice of our religion; becauſe there is but one, wherein our eternal welfare can be ſecured; as there was but one ark to ſave any man from periſhing in the flood. Whoever neglected to enter into it was loſt; and whoever neglects to enter into the true church, will periſh eternally: As has been fully proved.

It behoves us therefore, as we tender the eternal welfare of our ſouls, to examine with the utmoſt

utmoſt diligence and impartiality, where this one church is to be found. That is, by what marks we may clearly know her, and diſtinguiſh her from all others; to the end, firſt, that they who ſee thoſe marks in the church, whereof they are already members, may be fully aſſured that they are in the right way, and may enjoy this bleſſing, beſtowed upon them by the ſpecial providence of God, not only with a due ſenſe of gratitude, but alſo with an entire ſecurity and repoſe of mind: And 2dly, that they who find none of theſe marks in the church, into which they have been miſled, either by wilful neglect, or by the misfortunes of education, may be convinced that they are in a wrong way; and upon this conviction endeavour to find out that one true church, in which thoſe marks are manifeſtly apparent.

SECT. 2.

Neither Education nor Intereſt are to be conſulted in the Choice of our Religion.

G. I Perceive then, that a perſon's having been educated in this or that religion, is not a ſolid motive for his continuing in it.

P. Nothing is more certain than that it is not. Becauſe whoever acts upon a ſolid motive acts prudently: And ſo if education were a ſolid motive for any man's continuing in this or that religion, the greateſt part of the world, as Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, Socinians, Quakers, and in a word all hereticks and ſchiſmaticks brought up in their reſpective ways, would act prudently in continuing their whole lives in a ſtate of eternal damnation. For all theſe have education to plead for them, and may ſay, I have received my religion from my parents, who ventured their ſouls upon that bottom. Therefore I ought to ſit down

ſatisfied

ſatisfied with it, and not be running about in ſearch of I know not what. But this is as irrational, as if any one was to argue thus: I have got the leproſy or king's evil of my parents: therefore I ought to reſt content with it, and not give myſelf the trouble of ſeeking after remedies for my cure.

G. But is it not rational to ſay, I have been brought up in the true faith; therefore I ought to perſevere in it.

P. It cannot be doubted, but that whoever has been brought up in the true faith, is bound to perſevere in it. But then he ought to have ſome better motive than that of education to convince him, that the faith he has been brought up in is the true one. For if he has little or nothing more to ſay for his religion, than that he has been educated in it; this is ſo weak a foundation to build upon, that the very firſt violent ſtorm of perſecution may ſuffice to make him ſtagger in his faith, and incline him to believe, that his education has been his misfortune rather than a bleſſing; and that the beſt religion is that in which there is ſome proſpect of gain, and no danger of loſing: Becauſe good ſenſe alone will tell him, that education is of itſelf no argument either for or againſt the truth. And if at the ſame time, he be ignorant of the true and ſolid grounds of his religion, he will be ſtrongly tempted to chooſe that in which his temporal intereſt will be beſt ſecured.

G. Yet all this notwithſtanding we find by experience, that the generality of mankind take up their religion juſt according to their education: And it is very probable, that if you and I had been brought up Socinians or Quakers, we might have been as zealous in that way, as the moſt zealous amongſt them.

P. That

P. That is very certain. And therefore we have reaſon to bleſs God for not having permitted us to be of that number. For ſince Chriſt has poſitively pronounced, that *he who believeth not, ſhall be condemned*, Mark 16. v. 16. we may eaſily infer, what would have attended both you and me, in caſe we had been brought up ſocinians or quakers, and continued ſo to the end of our lives. For I do not find that Chriſt made any exception in favour of the caſe of education: which therefore will not excuſe any of thoſe, who being come to the perfect uſe of reaſon, and rendered capable of examining the true grounds of revealed religion, chooſe to go on blindfold in their errors, rather than give themſelves the trouble of a diligent enquiry into the truth.

G. However there are many who appear very ſolicitous and ſincere in their ſearch after the truth, and profeſs a readineſs to embrace it, if they were convinced of their being in a wrong way; yet for all that never make a diſcovery of the hidden treaſure, they ſeek after.

P. But is their deſire to find the truth as hearty and ſincere, as what we uſually obſerve in thoſe, who are in ſearch of ſome valuable worldly treaſure? Have they no intereſt at heart, inconſiſtent with that of embracing the truth? Are they ready to imitate the couragious virtue of Tobias, who when all flocked to the golden calves ſet up by Jeroboam, ſeparated himſelf from the communion of his fellow-citizens, and went up alone to the temple at Jeruſalem to make his offerings there to God, according to the law of Moſes? Tob. 1. v. 5, 6. where theſe marks of a true zeal appear, it cannot be queſtioned but the heart is ſincere. But as long as perſons, though diſſatisfied in their minds, go on in their accuſtomed conformity to the religion a-la-mode, and are afraid either to read proper

books, or apply themſelves to proper perſons for their full inſtruction, we may ſay of them without the leaſt danger of raſh judgment, that the golden calves of liberty and intereſt, have the prevailing power over their hearts, notwithſtanding the ſhew they make from time to time, of ſome inclinations towards the truth, which they are but too apt to miſtake for ſincere deſires; and ſo flatter themſelves into a perſuaſion, that if they be in a wrong way, it is their misfortune, but not their fault; becauſe they know no better: whereas if they called their own hearts to an impartial account, they would find that the love of eaſe, the ſolicitudes of this life, the fear of incurring the cenſure or diſpleaſure of friends, or falling under the laſh of perſecuting laws, are the real obſtacles to their finding and embracing the truth. For it has been found unqueſtionably true both from the nature of the thing and from long experience, that whoever has any intereſt nearer to his heart, than that of ſaving his ſoul, will upon all occaſions, when either the one or the other muſt be ſacrificed, ſtrike in with that religion, whether right or wrong, which ſuits beſt with his temporal intereſt.

G. I find at leaſt that intereſt and truth, are not utterly irreconcilable, but that a man may conſult his temporal intereſt, without betraying his conſcience.

P. It would be a madneſs to diſpute it: for otherwiſe a man would be damned for profeſſing the true religion in a country, where it has the law on it's ſide. What therefore I aſſert is this; that no man ought to conform to, or choſe any religion, merely becauſe it has the law on it's ſide. That is to ſay, that neither intereſt nor education, but barely the force of truth, ought to be conſulted by him as a motive to determine him

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in the choice of the religion, he intends to live and die in: that therefore he muſt not conſider, whether the church he is, or intends to be a member of, be the prevailing church of the country where he lives, or has been born: Nor whether it be moſt favourable to his liberty and eaſe: nor finally, whether it be the church, in which he is moſt like to make his fortune; but his whole examination ought to be of this one ſingle point, whether it has all the neceſſary and eſſential marks of the true church of Chriſt, in which alone ſalvation is to be found, as has been fully proved.

G. I muſt own, Sir, this is as ſure and eaſy a method to direct us to the true church, as a pillar ſet up on purpoſe to ſhew the road to any place, is to direct travellers to find their way to it. I therefore deſire you to let me know, what thoſe marks are.

P. I preſume, Sir, you ſtand in no need to be convinced, that the way you are in is preferable to that of Jews, Turks, Pagans, Deiſts, Socinians, Quakers, and ſuch others, who cannot even ſtile themſelves Chriſtians.

G. No, Sir, the point I deſire to be ſatisfied in, lies in a much narrower compaſs, and only regards the church of Rome, on the one hand, and the church of England, on the other. For ſince all the Proteſtant churches ground their ſeperation, from the church of Rome, upon the ſame ſpecious pretence, to wit, the ſuppoſed groſs errors and unwarrantable practices of that church; if you can fully convince me, that all the marks of the true church of Chriſt belong ſo wholly and ſolely to the church of Rome, that they cannot with any appearance of truth, be appropriated to the church of England, nor by conſequence to any other of the Proteſtant churches, as being all upon the ſame bottom, I ſhall then venture to maintain boldly,

that it is not my having been brought up a Roman Catholic, but the clear evidence and invincible force of truth, that keeps me ſtedfaſt in the Roman Catholic church. The reaſon is clear, becauſe a man muſt be either deſtitute of common ſenſe, or void of all concern for his ſoul's ſalvation, if he does not chooſe, preferably to any other, the communion of that church, which alone has all the marks of it's being the true church of Chriſt on it's ſide. For where is true faith to be found but in the true church? and how is the true church to be found but by the marks, which diſtinguiſh her from all other churches?

P. What you ſay, Sir, is unanſwerable. Nay if true faith is not to be found in the true church of Chriſt, we muſt give the lie firſt to St. Paul, who calls it *the pillar and ground of the truth.* 1 Tim. 3. v. 15. 2dly, to the creed, which declares the church of Chriſt to be holy, and the communion of ſaints. And 3dly, to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who has ſolemnly promiſed that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* Math. 16. v. 18. That *the ſpirit of truth ſhall guide it into all truth.* Joh. 16. v. 13. And that *he will be with it always even unto the end of the world.* Math. 28. v. 20.

This then is the church we are bound to ſeek after, to wit, the true church of Chriſt. And ſince there is no other way poſſible to ſucceed in this enquiry, than by a diligent examination of the neceſſary and eſſential marks, by which this church may be diſtinguiſhed from all others, the whole iſſue of the controverſy between us and Proteſtants relating to this ſubject, depends upon the deciſion of this one queſtion, to wit, on what ſide theſe marks appear? That is, whether on the Roman Catholic or Proteſtant ſide? If any of the Proteſtant churches (as for example the church of England, which according to your propoſal,

poſal, I ſhall ſingle out for brevity's ſake, and to avoid confuſion) if, I ſay, the Proteſtant church of England, can effectually prove, that ſhe has on her ſide the neceſſary and eſſential marks of that apoſtolical church, which Chriſt eſtabliſhed upon earth, and to which he made the promiſes of a perpetual aſſiſtance, I will then own her to be a part of the true church of Chriſt. But if on the contrary I make it appear manifeſtly, that they belong entirely to the church in communion with the ſee of Rome, excluſively of all the Proteſtant churches; then the church of England muſt own, that ſhe is engaged in a defenceleſs cauſe, and can have no title to the promiſes, till ſhe returns to her old mother-church, whereof ſhe was a part for the ſpace of no leſs than nine hundred years.

It is this I ſhall now endeavour to make out. But becauſe the clearing of this matter has a great connection with the hiſtory, both of the firſt eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity in this iſland on the one hand, and of the pretended Engliſh reformation on the other; it will be neceſſary to bring you thoroughly acquainted with the moſt material facts and circumſtances, relating to the one as well as to the other. And indeed there needs nothing more than a plain and impartial view of them to render you capable of forming a ſolid judgment, firſt, whether the converſion or reformation of England was properly the work of God; for he could not be the author of both. And 2dly, whether the eſſential external marks of the true church of Chriſt, to wit, her perpetual viſibility, her uninterrupted ſucceſſion of biſhops and paſtors in the ſame communion from the apoſtles down to this time, and her Catholicity or univerſality both of time and place, are applicable to the Proteſtant church of England, or to the churches in communion with the ſee of Rome. That is, whether

they be on the Proteſtant or Roman Catholic ſide.

G. You know, Sir, I have always been a lover of hiſtory. And therefore, ſince the hiſtorical account you have promiſed me, will be ſo conducible to my forming a true judgment of the two important points mentioned by you, I ſhall liſten to you with the greateſt attention.

SECT. 3.

Of the firſt Entrance of CHRISTIANITY into BRITAIN: It's Progreſs and Eſtabliſhment there, in the Reign of King LUCIUS.

P. ALL eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians mention two general converſions of this iſland. The firſt under Pope Eleutherius, towards the end of the ſecond century, and the other under Pope Gregory the great, about the end of the ſixth, or beginning of the ſeventh; though there were ſeveral particular converſions of a much earlier date. For it cannot be queſtioned, but that ſeveral perſons profeſſing the Chriſtian faith came over into Britain, not only in the apoſtolic age, but even ſoon after the firſt preaching of the goſpel, which by the indefatigable zeal of the apoſtles, was in the ſpace of a very few years, carried into all the chief parts of the known world. Rom. 1. v. 8. as I have already told you.

Our bleſſed Saviour was pleaſed to ſuffer death, in the 18th year of Tiberius, who ſucceeded Auguſtus in the government of the Roman empire. Tiberius lived but 5 years after, and his ſucceſſor Caligula reigned but 4 years in all, and was ſucceeded by Claudius; in the ſecond year of whoſe reign, that is eleven years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, St. Peter came to Rome, and there fixed his epiſcopal ſeat according to Euſebius, who writes thus

thus to him. " Peter the apoſtle of the country " of Galilee, the firſt chief biſhop of Chriſtians, " after he had founded the church of Antioch, " went to Rome; and having there preached the " goſpel, remained biſhop of that city for 25 " years together. Euſ. in Chron. An. Chriſti 44."

The very next year after St. Peter's coming to Rome, the war between the Britons and Romans, broke out into ſuch a violent flame, that the emperor Claudius reſolved to go over in perſon into Britain, as he did effectually. And it is very probable that ſeveral Chriſtians accompanied him in that expedition; becauſe the goſpel had then been preached for full 12 years, and great numbers converted to the faith of Chriſt. So that we may date the firſt entrance of Chriſtianity into this iſland from that time: though the number of the faithful in it was but ſmall, and made an inconſiderable figure in the eyes of the world. But this war continuing for the ſpace of 40 years together, that is, to the fourth year of Domitian, when the whole country was ſubdued, and reduced into the form of a Roman province, it appears very reaſonable to conjecture, that during theſe long wars, as the number of Chriſtians encreaſed daily at Rome, by the continual preaching of St. Peter, and his immediate ſucceſſors, as likewiſe of his fellow-apoſtle St. Paul, who was there with him for ſeveral years; ſo it encreaſed amongſt the Britons in proportion by the frequent intercourſe of perſons going to, and coming from Rome, occaſioned by thoſe wars.

The reaſon is plain, becauſe Rome being then the metropolis of the whole empire, and the moſt beautiful and magnificent city in the world, it is probable that many Britons went thither partly for pleaſure, or to ſatisfy their curioſity, and partly to avoid being perſonally involved in the calami-

ties of a bloody war: or at leaſt to keep at a diſtance, from the melancholy ſight of the utter ruin and deſolation of their native country. Beſides that there were taken at Rome ſeveral Britons kept there as hoſtages, and great numbers of priſoners were alſo ſent thither: as amongſt others king Caractacus, who together with many of the nobility was, as Tacitus relates, ſent priſoner to Rome, in the eleventh year of Claudius, by Oſtorius, then the Roman general, or governor in Britain.

Now it is not improbable, that many of theſe Britons reſiding for ſeveral years at Rome (where the goſpel was very much propagated towards the latter end of Claudius's reign, as appears from St. Paul's epiſtle to the Romans, addreſſed about that time to the converted Jews and Gentiles of that populous city) it is not improbable, I ſay, that many of theſe Britons were of the happy number of the converted Gentiles, and when they returned back to their own country, as they believed the Chriſtian doctrine themſelves ſo they became the providential inſtruments of the converſion of others.

Add to this that many eminent authors, whoſe teſtimony is not to be deſpiſed, aſſert poſitively, that at the ſame time when all the Jews were by an edict of the emperor Claudius baniſhed from Rome, St. Peter amongſt others, being a native of Galilee, retired for ſome time in obedience to the emperor's edict, and took that occaſion to paſs over to this iſland, where, according to theſe authors, he became the firſt eccleſiaſtical planter of the Chriſtian faith. It is likewiſe credibly aſſerted, that Ariſtobulus an eminent Roman convert mentioned by St. Paul, Rom. 16. v. 10. was ſent over into Britain by St. Peter, whoſe diſciple he was: as alſo that St. Joſeph of Arimathea was directed

directed thither by the ſame apoſtle; or as others ſay, by St. Philip, with about twelve other Chriſtians, and obtained there a place in the iſland called Avallonia, where Glaſtenbury was afterwards built, and where they ſpent the remainder of their days in continual retirement and prayer, and other penitential exerciſes, in order to train themſelves up to the bearing of the croſs, as Cambden expreſſes it.

But let this be as it will, for I lay no ſtreſs, nor build any argument upon theſe facts, it is manifeſt, that the ſeeds of Chriſtianity were ſown very early in this iſland; though as in other countries, they were not ripened into a public and total converſion for many years after. Nay Rome itſelf continued to be the great metropolis of heathen idolatry as well as of the empire, and the declared enemy to Chriſtianity for near upon 300 years after the firſt preaching of the apoſtles; though both St. Peter and St. Paul had for ſome years laboured for it's converſion with an unwearied patience and zeal; though it had been honoured for thoſe three centuries by a ſucceſſion of biſhops, all eminent ſaints and martyrs, and though it was the very fountain, whence all the ſtreams of the living waters of the goſpel flowed into almoſt all the weſtern parts of the world. So true it is, that the works of grace have their gradual progreſs like thoſe of nature; and the Chriſtian Rome was almoſt as long a building as the Heathen Rome, before it came to it's height and ſplendor.

G. I conceive then, that in the firſt century, or apoſtolic age, there was not in Britain a Chriſtian church, regularly formed under the government of biſhops and ſubalternate paſtors. Nor any public or ſolemn exerciſe of the Catholic religion, as

there is now in all countries, where the Catholic faith is profeſſed.

P. Very right, Sir: that bleſſing was reſerved for the latter end of the following century, when Lucius king of the Britons, was himſelf converted to the faith of Chriſt.

This Lucius was the ſon of Coilus king of Britain, in the reign of Trajan, and his ſucceſſor Adrian emperors of Rome, to whom though the Britiſh kings were become tributary by the conqueſt of their country, yet were they permited to exerciſe regal power in their dominions. King Coilus, although there be not ſufficient grounds to aſſert poſitively, that he became himſelf a Chriſtian, as ſome ſay, yet it is recorded by very authentic hiſtorians, that being moved partly by the relation he had of the ſtupendous miracles, wrought every where by thoſe, who had received the faith, and their invincible courage in ſuffering the moſt cruel torments in defence of it; and partly by the exemplary lives of the Chriſtian preachers and converts in his own dominions, of which he was an eye-witneſs, he was not only very much inclined to it himſelf, but even favoured the converſion of all ſuch amongſt his ſubjects, as were deſirous to embrace the faith of Chriſt. So that it cannot with any reaſon be queſtioned, but that he inſtilled the ſame favourable diſpoſitions to Chriſtianity into his ſon Lucius; which by God's grace he retained after his acceſſion to the crown; and ſo gave all encouragement poſſible to evangelical preachers, both foreign and domeſtic, to propagate the goſpel in his dominions.

The chief amongſt theſe was one Timothy the younger ſon of Pudens a Roman ſenator, and Claudia both mentioned by St. Paul, 2 Tim. 4. v. 21. and converted by St. Peter at his firſt coming

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ing to Rome, where he had his uſual reſidence in their houſe, as likewiſe many of his holy ſucceſſors after him: which together with their boundleſs charity, and hoſpitality to all diſtreſſed Chriſtians, drew ſo great a bleſſing upon them, that both they and their four children, Novatus, Timothy, Pudentiana and Praxedes, became all eminent ſaints.

St. Timothy, after having been fully inſtructed in all the principles of the Chriſtian religion by ſuch excellent maſters as were conſtantly harboured in his father's houſe, was ordained prieſt, and ſent into Britain, where he preached for ſeveral years, with ſo much zeal and fruit, that he converted great numbers, not only of the common people, but of the nobility alſo; and by diſputing publicly with the heathen prieſts called Druids, brought ſeveral of them over to the faith of Chriſt; which ſome years after facilitated very much the total converſion of Britain. For many of theſe being men of learning, like the Athenian philoſophers brought up in heathen ſchools, were afterwards ordained biſhops or prieſts, and became excellent labourers in Chriſt's vineyard.

But that which gave the finiſhing ſtroke to this great work, was the public converſion of the king himſelf. He had been well diſpoſed even before his coming to the crown, as I have already obſerved: and many things concurred afterwards to cultivate this diſpoſition in him: as on the one hand the inhuman and ſcandalous practices of the Druids, who for their inſolence, barbarity, and lewdneſs were then become both odious and contemptible to the generality of mankind: and on the other the innocent and edifying behaviour of Chriſtians, the purity of their doctrine, and the prodigious encreaſe of their numbers in all parts of the empire, notwithſtanding

ſtanding the repeated ſanguinary edicts publiſhed againſt them, and uſually executed with the utmoſt rigour. Add to this the perſuaſive diſcourſes of St. Timothy and other apoſtolical preachers, which convinced king Lucius ſo fully of the cheat and vanity of heathen idols, and the ſolid truth of the Chriſtian faith, that he reſolved ſeriouſly, and promiſed to embrace it openly; though he did not judge it ſeaſonable till ſome years after to put this good purpoſe effectually in execution.

There were two main obſtacles, which though he was a convert in his heart, kept him back for ſome time from declaring himſelf in a public manner. Firſt, the oppoſition he was afraid of from his own people, which might occaſion a general diſturbance or revolution in his kingdom; as changes in religion uſually do. And 2dly, his fear of incurring the diſpleaſure of the Roman emperors, of whom he had a great dependance in the exerciſe of his regal power. The firſt, was gradually removed by the converſion of many of the nobility, as likewiſe of ſeveral amongſt the Druids; both which had great influence upon the common people, and ripened them for an entire change of worſhip. The ſecond was ſome time after, through the merciful diſpoſition of God, removed by the emperor himſelf then reigning; I mean, Marcus Aurelius Antonius; who after the miraculous deliverance of his army from imminent deſtruction by the prayers of the Chriſtians that ſerved in it, became from a violent perſecutor their powerful protector, and put forth an edict, with poſitive orders to have it ſent into all the provinces of the empire, forbidding all his ſubjects, under pain of being burnt alive, to proſecute any Chriſtian on the ſcore of religion.

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As ſoon as this edict was publiſhed in Britain, king Lucius, having then both the emperor and the general inclinations of the people favourable to him, heſitated no longer to declare himſelf, and confeſs with his mouth what he believed in his heart. He therefore ſent an embaſſy to Rome, deſired St. Eleutherius, who then ſat in St. Peter's chair, to furniſh him with perſons proper to accompliſh the work already ſo happily begun. I ſhall relate the fact in the words of Hollingſhead a Proteſtant hiſtorian.

" King Lucius, ſays he, ſent unto Eleutherius " biſhop of Rome, two learned men of the Bri- " tiſh nation, Elvan and Wedwin, requiring him " to ſend ſome ſuch miniſters, as might inſtruct " him and his people in the true faith more plen- " tifully, and baptize them according to the rules " of Chriſtian religion. Hereupon were ſent by " the ſaid Eleutherius two godly learned men, the " one named Fugatius, and the other Damianus. " Holinſ. Hiſt. of England, L. 4. C. 19."

Theſe two holy and learned biſhops St. Fugatius and Damianus, who came over about the year of Chriſt 178 with full powers from the apoſtolic ſee, being favoured by a great part both of the nobility and common people, and powerfully ſupported by the regal authority, exerciſed all apoſtolical and epiſcopal functions in this land, preached and baptized, ordained biſhops and prieſts, cauſed the heathen idols to be pulled down every-where, converted their prophane temples into Chriſtian churches; and in a word, God giving a plentiful bleſſing to their pious labours, in a few years time, that is, before the end of the ſecond century, aboliſhed paganiſm, and brought at leaſt that part of the Britiſh nation, which was ſubject to king Lucius, over to the Chriſtian faith.

G. But how long did it continue ſo?

P. All

P. All agree that (allowing only for ſome errors of the Pelagian hereſy, from which it was ſoon after purged by the preaching of St. Germanus and Lupus two French biſhops) the Chriſtian faith was maintained in it till the Saxon conqueſt, when the ancient Britons being driven out of their own country by thoſe, whom they had unadviſedly called in to aſſiſt them againſt the Scots, were forced to fly for ſhelter into the mountainous country of Wales, and other neighbouring places; and freſh ſwarms of Saxon idolators pouring in continually into the provinces they had abandoned, though they themſelves perſevered, as I have already ſaid, in the profeſſion of the faith they had received, almoſt all that part of Great Britain, which we now call England, became once more a prey to paganiſm, and continued ſo, till the latter end of the ſixth century, when, by the diſpoſitions of God, which reaches ſtrongly from end to end, and diſpoſeth all things ſweetly, king Ethelbert together with his kingdom of Kent, embraced the goſpel preached to them by perſons ſent thither for that end by the apoſtolic ſee: and their example was ſoon after followed by the other ſix kingdoms of the heptarchy, into which England was then divided by it's pagan conquerors the Saxons. And this is the ſecond general converſion of England, for which it ſtands indebted next to God, to the piety and zeal of the biſhop of Rome. In recompence whereof his holy ſee has ſince been diſtinguiſhed here by the honourable title of the whore of Babylon, and his ſacred perſon by that of Antichriſt.

SECT.

SECT. 4.

Of the Converſion of the ENGLISH SAXONS from PAGANISM to CHRISTIANITY.

G. BUT ſince that part of Great Britain, which is now called England, (to diſtinguiſh it, as I ſuppoſe from Scotland and Wales) was by that general inundation of the Saxons, once more almoſt entirely drowned in paganiſm, as you have told me, I muſt beg the favour of you to inform me of the moſt material particularities relating to it's ſecond general converſion. As, who were the principal undertakers of that difficult talk; and by what means it was effected?

P. Sir, I will endeavour to make my relation of it, as ſuccinct as poſſible. Pope Gregory the firſt of that name, and moſt deſervedly ſirnamed the great, in regard of his great abilities, his holineſs, his learning, and unbounded zeal for the converſion of ſouls, * as he happened one day, when he was yet a private prieſt at Rome, to walk through the market, where ſlaves were expoſed to ſale, obſerved amongſt them ſome very beautiful youths, both for the fineneſs of their complexion, and comelineſs of their perſons: and having aſked the merchant they belonged to, what country they were of? He was anſwered, they came from Britain, and that this country was full of ſuch comely perſons. Then he aſked whether theſe iſlanders were Chriſtians or heathens? And being told they were heathens, he fetched a deep ſigh and ſaid, It was a lamentable conſideration, that the prince of darkneſs ſhould be maſter of ſo much beauty, and have ſo many graceful perſons in his poſſeſſion, and that ſo fine an outſide

* Johan. Diacon. vit. Greg. L. 1. C. 21.

outside should have nothing of God's grace to adorn it within.

But not content with mere good wishes or barren desires of their conversion, he solicited pope Benedict to send some able ministers, to preach the gospel to them. The proposal was not at all disrelished by the pope, but the difficulty was to find proper persons, that would undertake so hard a task; and several having excused themselves, partly on pretence of their own disabilities, and partly in regard of the savageness of the people they should have to deal with, the barbarity of their language and manners, and in a word the uncertainty of the event, St. Gregory freely offered himself, and upon having his request granted, was already advanced two or three days journey from Rome, when the pope was forced to recal him, to quiet the commotions of the people loudly murmuring to be deprived of so excellent a person.

Thus things remained till about seven years after, when Benedict and his successor Pelagius being dead, St. Gregory was promoted to the chair of St. Peter: and then it was that he resolved to execute that by the ministry of others, which he had not been permitted by the providence of God to perform in his own person. It was in the fourth year of his pontificate, he began to put this Christian design in execution, and the principal instrument he made choice of for so great a work, was one Augustin a monk of his own monastery at Rome, whom he knew to be a person of so extraordinary merits, and with whom he associated several other monks of the same monastery. These in obedience to his command immediately set forward on their journey to Britain; the particularities whereof I shall recite from Bede's ecclesiastical

ſiaſtical hiſtory as tranſlated into Engliſh by the worthy Mr. Stevens.

" Pope Gregory (ſays this venerable author) " being moved by divine inſpiration, ſent the ſer- " vant of God, Auguſtin, and with him ſeveral " other monks fearing the Lord, to preach the " word of God to the Engliſh nation. They " having in obedience to the pope's commands " undertaken that work, and gone part of their " way being ſeized with a ſlothful fear, began " to think of returning home rather than to pro- " ceed to a barbarous, fierce and unbelieving na- " tion, to whoſe very language they were ſtran- " gers: and this they unanimouſly agreed was " the ſafeſt courſe. In ſhort, they ſent back Au- " guſtin, (whom, he the pope, had appointed to " be conſecrated biſhop, in caſe they were re- " ceived by the Engliſh) that he might by hum- " ble entreaty obtain of the holy Gregory, that " they ſhould not be compelled to undertake ſo " dangerous, ſo toilſome and ſo uncertain a " journey."

The pope finding his miſſionaries thus diſpirited, ſent Auguſtin back to them with a letter to encourage them to proceed in their journey, as alſo with another letter to Etherius archbiſhop of Arles to deſire him to give his miſſioners a friendly reception, and furniſh them with what conveniencies he could for their journey. Both theſe letters are to be ſeen in Bede's Eccleſ. Hiſt. L. 1 C. 23. 24. The ſame author proceeds thus, C. 25.

" Auguſtin being ſtrengthened by the confirma- " tion of the bleſſed father Gregory, returned to " the work of the word of God with the ſervants " of Chriſt, and arrived in Britain. Ethelbert was " at that time the moſt potent king of Kent, " who had extended his dominions as far as

" the

" the great river Humber, by which the ſouthern " Saxons are divided from the northern. On the " eaſt ſide of Kent is the iſle of Thanet.——In " this iſland landed the ſervant of our Lord Au- " guſtin and his companions, being as is reported " about 40 men. They had by order of the bleſſed " pope Gregory taken interpreters of the nation " of Franks [whoſe language differed but little " from that of the Saxons] by theſe Auguſtin " ſending to Ethelbert, ſignified to him, that " he was come from Rome, and brought a joy- " ful meſſage, which moſt undoubtedly aſſured all, " that took the advantage of it, of everlaſting joys " in Heaven, and a kingdom that would never " end with the living and true God. The king " having heard this, ordered them to ſtay in the " iſland where they had landed, and that they " ſhould be furniſhed with all neceſſaries, till he " ſhould conſider what to do with them. For he " had heard before of the Chriſtian religion, as " having a Chriſtian wife of the royal family of " France called Berta; whom he had received " from her parents upon condition, that ſhe " ſhould be permitted to practiſe her religion " with the biſhop Luidhard given her to preſerve " her faith.

" Some days after, the king came into the " iſland, and ſitting in the open air, ordered Au- " guſtin and his companions to be brought into " his preſence: for he had taken precaution, that " they ſhould not come to him in any houſe, ac- " cording to the ancient ſuperſtition, leſt if they " had any magical ſpells, they might at their " coming impoſe upon, and get the better of him. " But they came armed with divine virtue, not " with diabolical charms, bearing a ſilver croſs " for their banner, and the image of our Lord " and Saviour painted on a board; and ſinging

" the

" the litany offered up their prayers to the Lord " for their own and the eternal ſalvation of thoſe " to whom they were come.

" Having purſuant to the king's commands, " after ſitting down, preached to him and all his " attendants there preſent the word of life, he " anſwered thus: Your words and promiſes are " very taking, but in regard that they are new and " uncertain, I cannot approve of them ſo as to " forſake that which I have ſo long followed with " the whole Engliſh nation. But becauſe you are " come from far into my kingdom, and, as I con- " ceive, are deſirous to impart to us thoſe things, " which you believe to be true, and moſt beneficial, " we will not moleſt you, but rather give you fa- " vourable entertainment, and take care to ſupply " you with neceſſary ſuſtenance; nor do we forbid " you by preaching to gain as many as you can to " your religion. Accordingly he gave them a " dwelling place in the city of Canterbury, which " was the metropolis of all his dominions: and " purſuant to his promiſe, beſides allowing them " their diet permitted them to preach. It is re- " ported, that as they drew near to the city, after " their manner with the holy croſs and the image " of the great king our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they in " conſort ſung this litany or prayer. We beſeech " thee, O Lord, in thy mercy; that thy anger " and wrath be turned away from this city and " this thy holy houſe becauſe we have ſinned, Al- " lelujah."

Thus the holy croſs took once more poſſeſſion of the place, from whence it had been baniſhed ever ſince the Saxon conqueſt; and there it continued for above 900 years; that is, till the reign of Edward VI. when to the everlaſting ſhame of Chriſtianity it was treated as an image of ſome infamous traitor to the ſtate, and pulled down every

every where in this iſland by the *bleſſed reformation.*

G. It appears to me very ſurprizing, that a heathen prince, ſhould at the very firſt ſight of perſons of a different religion, who even profeſſed themſelves enemies to his, entertain them with ſo much courteſy.

P. Sir, you have already heard from venerable Bede, that king Ethelbert had by a ſpecial providence of God been married for ſome years to a Chriſtian princeſs of France, who had the practice of her religion ſecured to her by articles of marriage, and had for that end brought over with her the holy biſhop Luidhard, or Lethardus; beſides ſeveral Chriſtian ſervants, whoſe moral lives far different from that of heathens, had doubtleſs very much recommended the religion they profeſſed, and inſpired the king with a favourable opinion of it. Which having in a great meaſure removed the uſual prejudices of education, occaſioned without all diſpute the favourable reception, which St. Auguſtin and his companions met with.

But to proceed in my account of theſe holy miſſioners, whom I left in their manſion at Canterbury, let us now hear what Bede has tranſmitted to poſterity concerning their way of living there. This holy and learned writer flouriſhed here in England in the very next age after the entire converſion of it. That is, when all tranſactions of any moment relating to it, were as freſh in the minds of all men of literature, as the hiſtory of the happy reſtoration of king Charles the 2d is now ſtill freſh in the minds of perſons of any reading.

This author therefore tells us, L. 1. C. 26. that "As ſoon as they entered into the dwelling-place "aſſigned them, they began to imitate the courſe "of

" of life practiſed by the primitive church. That " is, applyed themſelves to frequent prayer, watch- " ing and faſting; preached the word of life to " as many as they could; deſpiſing all worldly " things as not belonging to them, received only " what was neceſſary for food from thoſe they " taught, living themſelves in all reſpects con- " formably to what they preſcribed to others, and " being always diſpoſed to ſuffer any adverſity, " and even to die for the truth they preached. In " ſhort, ſome believed and were baptized, ad- " miring the ſimplicity of their innocent courſe " of life, and the ſweetneſs of their heavenly " doctrine.

The ſame author goes on thus in the ſame chapter: " There was, ſays he, on the eaſt-ſide " near the city a chapel dedicated to the honour " of St. Martin, whilſt the Romans were ſtill " in the iſland, wherein the queen, who, as has " been ſaid, was a Chriſtian, uſed to pray. In " this they firſt began to meet, to ſing, to ſay " maſs, to preach and to baptize, till the king " being converted to the faith, they had leave " granted them more freely to preach, and build " or repair churches in all places. But when " he among the reſt being taken with the unſpot- " ted lives of theſe holy men, and their moſt " agreeable promiſes, which they proved to be " moſt certain by working of many miracles, be- " lieved and was baptized, great numbers be- " gan daily to flock to hear the word, and for- " ſaking their heathen rites to aſſociate them- " ſelves by faith to the unity of the church of " Chriſt. Whoſe faith and converſion the king " ſo far encouraged, as not to compel any one to " embrace Chriſtianity, but only to ſhew more " affection to the believers, as to his fellow- " citizens in the heavenly kingdom. For he had

" learned

" learned from his inſtructors and leaders to ſalva-
" tion, that the ſervice of Chriſt ought to be vo-
" luntary, not by compulſion. Nor was it long
" before he gave his teachers a ſettled place in his
" metropolis of Canterbury with the neceſſary
" poſſeſſions in ſeveral ſorts."

After this St. Auguſtin croſſed the ſeas into France, travelled to Arles, and purſuant to St. Gregory's orders, was conſecrated metropolitan of the Engliſh nation by Etherius archbiſhop of that city. So that all the biſhops of Britain, were by pope Gregory put under St. Auguſtin's juriſdiction.

St. Auguſtin being thus qualified, returned back to Britain, where by the King's converſion he found the number of the faithful encreaſed to ſuch a degree, that this ſaying of Chriſt, *the harveſt is plentiful, but the labourers are few*, Math. 9. v. 37. was literally verified, and he found it neceſſary to apply himſelf to the apoſtolic ſee for a new ſupply of miſſioners. He therefore deputed to St. Gregory, two very holy perſons, the one named Laurence, who afterwards ſucceeded him in the archbiſhoprick of Canterbury, the other Peter, who was made abbot by him of the firſt convent of monks founded by king Ethelbert in the ſame city. Theſe two after ſome ſtay at Rome, returned back accompanied by an addition of twelve able miſſioners all monks, and choſen by St. Gregory himſelf; who (as Bede relates L. 1. C. 29.) ſent over with them all things neceſſary for the worſhip of God, and ſervice of the church, viz. ſacred veſſels, and veſtments for altars; alſo ornaments for churches, and veſtments for prieſts and clerks, as likewiſe relicks of the holy apoſtles and martyrs; beſides many books.

Among theſe new miſſioners was St. Melitus, to whom whilſt he was upon his journey to Britain,

Britain, St. Gregory wrote, that whereas he had before given his advice to king Ethelbert, that the idol-temples ſhould be demoliſhed, he had upon recollection altered his mind, and ſo gave the followtng directions, viz. that the temples themſelves ought not to be deſtroyed. But (ſays he) let the idols that are in them be deſtroyed; let holy water be made and ſprinkled in the ſaid temples, let altars be erected, and relicks be depoſited in them. Meaning, as he explains himſelf a little after, the relicks of thoſe ſaints, in whoſe honour the churches were to be dedicated to God. L. 1. c. 30.

The new miſſioners being thus provided with things neceſſary for their functions, arrived ſafe in England, an. 601, and putting themſelves under the conduct of their holy archbiſhop, laboured in Chriſt's vineyard with that happy ſucceſs, that the whole kingdom of Kent was ſoon after converted, and became a beautiful part of Chriſt's myſtical body, the holy Catholic church.

SECT. 3.

A Relation of St. AUGUSTIN's Conference with the Britiſh Biſhops.

G. BUT, Sir, I cannot well conceive, what need there was of ſending as far as Rome for a new ſupply of miſſioners, ſince it appears to me, that they might have been got much nearer home from the ancient Britons; amongſt whom there were doubtleſs ſeveral biſhops, and great numbers of the inferior clergy.

P. That is very true. But moſt hiſtorians obſerve, that they bore ſuch a mortal hatred to the Saxons, for having driven them out of their native country, that they could not be prevailed upon to afford any aſſiſtance towards their converſion.

verſion. Add to this, that (as it is atteſted by Gildas) they were fallen into ſo great a decay of piety, and a corruption of manners, that the generality of the clergy as well as laity had in a manner loſt all ſenſe of religion; and the zeal for God's glory and the converſion of ſouls, was utterly extinguiſhed in their hearts. So that inſtead of coming to St. Auguſtin's aid, and going hand in hand with him, they were as ſpies upon his actions, jealous of his authority, and envious of the great reputation he had got among the people. Nay Bede, L. 2. c. 20. relates, that one Caedwal, king of the Britons, though he bore the name of, and profeſſed himſelf a Chriſtian, rebelled againſt Edwin, king of the Northumbers, who but ſix years before had been converted, and received into the church by St. Paulinus, and was a moſt religious prince. That the ſame Caedwal joined with the pagan Penda, king of the Mercians, againſt the Chriſtian Northumbers, and was more barbarous and cruel than Penda himſelf: "For that he neither ſpared the female "ſex, nor the innocent age of children, but "with ſavage cruelty put them to tormenting "deaths, reſolving to cut off the race of the "Engliſh within the borders of Britain, without "having any regard to the Chriſtian religion, "which had newly taken root among them. "And the ſame author adds, that even to his "time it was the cuſtom of the Britains not to "have any regard to the faith and religion of "the Engliſh, nor to correſpond any more with "them than with pagans."

Such was their hatred to the Saxons; which however did not hinder our holy apoſtle from uſing his utmoſt endeavours to bring them to a more Chriſtian diſpoſition; and in order to it, being ſupported by the intereſt of king Ethelbert, he

he prevailed upon the Britiſh Biſhops and doctors to come to a public conferenee with him.

Cambden, in his account of Worceſterſhire, gives the following brief relation of this aſſembly. "About this territory (ſays he) there is a place, "but the poſition of it is uncertain, called Au- "guſtin's Ake, or Oak, at which Auguſtin, the "apoſtle of England, and the Britiſh biſhops "met: And after many hot diſputes about cele- "brating Eaſter, preaching the word of God to "the Saxons, and adminiſtring baptiſm after the "Roman rite, they parted from one another with "diſagreeing minds."

This is Cambden's ſhort account of this conference, and is very exact as far as it goes. But ſince the learned Mr. Collier, in his eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of Great Britain, has been pleaſed to draw ſome conſequences from the ſubject and particular circumſtances of it, which appear to me not to be ſo ſolid and concluſive, as might be expected from a perſon of his capacity, I ſhall recite to you the whole relation of it word for word from Bede, who writes thus, L. 2. C. 2.

"In the mean time Auguſtin, with the aſſiſt- "ance of king Ethelbert, drew together to con- "fer with the biſhops and doctors of the next "province of the Britons, at a place, which is "to this day called Auguſtin's Ac: that is, Au- "guſtin's Oak; on the borders of Wiccii [Wor- "ceſterſhire] and the weſt-Saxons: and began "by brotherly admonitions to perſuade them, to "preſerve Catholic unity with him, and under- "take the common labour of preaching the goſ- "pel to the Gentiles. For they did not keep "Eaſter at the proper time---beſides they did "ſeveral other things, which were againſt the "unity of the church. They, after a long diſ- "putation, not complying with the entreaties,

born

" exhortations, or rebukes of Auguſtin and his " companions, but preferring their traditions " before all the churches in the world, which in " Chriſt agree among themſelves, the holy father " Auguſtin put an end to this troubleſome and " tedious contention by ſaying, Let us beg of God, " who cauſes thoſe who are of one mind to live " in his father's houſe, that he will vouchſafe by " his heavenly tokens to declare to us, which tradi- " tion is to be followed, and by what means we are " to haſten to the entrance of his kingdom. Let " ſome infirm perſon be brought, and let the faith " and practice of thoſe, by whoſe prayers he ſhall " be healed, be looked upon as acceptable to God, " and to be followed by all.

" The adverſe party unwillingly conſenting, a " blind man of the Engliſh race was brought, who " having been preſented to the prieſts of the Bri- " tons, and finding no benefit or cure by their mi- " niſtry, at length Auguſtin compelled by real ne- " ceſſity bent his knees to the Father of our Lord " Jeſus Chriſt, praying that his loſt ſight might be " reſtored to the blind man, and that by the cor- " poreal enlightning of one perſon, the bright- " neſs of ſpiritual grace might ſhine in the hearts " of many. Immediately the blind man received " his ſight, and Auguſtin was by all declared the " preacher of ſovereign light. The Britons then " confeſſed they were ſenſible that the true way " of righteouſneſs, was that which St. Au- " guſtin taught; but that they could not depart " from their ancient cuſtoms without the con- " ſent and leave of their people. They there- " fore deſired that a ſynod might be appointed, " at which more of their number would be pre- " ſent.

" This being decreed, there came (as is aſ- " ſerted) ſeven biſhops of the Britons, and many " very

" very learned men; particularly from their no-
" ble monaſtery, which in the Engliſh tongue is
" called Bancornaburg, over which the abbot Di-
" nooth is ſaid to have preſided at that time.
" They that were to go to the aforeſaid council,
" repaired firſt to a certain holy and diſcreet man,
" who was wont to lead an eremitical life amongſt
" them, adviſing with him, whether they ought
" at the preaching of Auguſtin to forſake their
" traditions. He anſwered, If he is a man of
" God follow him. But how ſhall we know that,
" ſaid they? He replied; our Lord ſaith, take my
" yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am
" meek and lowly in heart. If therefore that
" Auguſtin is meek and lowly of heart, it is to be
" believed, that he has taken upon him the yoke
" of Chriſt, and offers the ſame to you to take upon
" you. But if he be ſtern and haughty, it appears
" that he is not of God, nor are we to regard his
" words. They inſiſted again. And how ſhall
" we diſcern even this? Do you contrive ſaid the
" anchoret, that he firſt arrive with his company
" at the place where the ſynod is to be held, and if
" at your approch he ſhall riſe up to you, hear him
" ſubmiſſively, being aſſured that he is the ſervant
" of Chriſt; but if he ſhall deſpiſe you and not riſe
" up to you, whereas you are more in number,
" let him alſo be deſpiſed by you.

" They did as he directed: and it happened that
" when they came, Auguſtin was ſitting on a
" chair; which they obſerving were in a paſſion,
" and charging him with pride endeavoured to
" contradict all he ſaid. He ſaid to them, you act
" in many particulars contrary to our cuſtom, or
" rather to the cuſtom of the univerſal church.
" And yet, if you will comply with me in theſe
" three points, viz. to keep Eaſter at the due time,
" to adminiſter baptiſm, by which we are again

" born to God, according to the cuſtom of the " holy Roman and apoſtolic church, and jointly " with us to preach the word of God to the Eng- " liſh nation, we will readily tolerate all other " things you do, though contrary to our cuſtoms. " They anſwered they would do none of thoſe " things, nor receive him as their archbiſhop. " Alledging among themſelves, that if he would " not now riſe up to us, how much more will he " contemn us as of no worth, if we ſhall begin to " be under his ſubjection. To whom the man of " God, Auguſtin, is ſaid to have foretold in a threat- " ning manner; that in caſe they would not join " in unity with their brethren, they ſhould be " warred upon by their enemies: and if they " would not preach the way of life to the Engliſh " nation, they ſhould by their hands undergo the " vengeance of God. All which through the diſ- " penſation of the divine judgment fell out ex- " actly as he had foretold."

SECT. 6.

St. AUGUSTIN vindicated.

THIS is holy Bede's relation of the two unſucceſsful conferences, St. Auguſtin had with the Britiſh biſhops: in the firſt whereof he proved his miſſion, and the truth of his doctrine, by that unconteſted and celebrated miracle of reſtoring in a moment by his prayers a blind man to the perfect uſe of his ſight. Which though it was attended with the public acclamations of all the ſpectators, and even drew an acknowledgment from his Britiſh adverſaries, that it was the true way of righteouſneſs, which Auguſtin taught, yet could not overcome the prepoſſeſſion and obſtinacy, they laboured under. So that although their judgments were convinced, their obdurate and exulcerated

exulcerated hearts continued to rebel againſt the truth.

G. However they demanded a ſecond and more numerous meeting, which ſhewed at leaſt that they were not wholly averſe from joining with St. Auguſtin.

P. Pardon me Sir; it only ſhewed, that they were under a very great confuſion at the unexpected ſight of a miracle, which could neither be denied, nor diſcredited by any artifice; yet was a flat condemnation of their non-compliance. In a word, it ſhewed that though they had nothing to ſay for themſelves, they were reſolved not to yield, but only ſought to gain time, as men under great perplexities are wont to do: becauſe they might in the interim concert meaſures together, and ſome expedient to retrieve their loſt credit might poſſibly occur to their minds. But I muſt needs ſay, they were put to very hard ſhifts, when they could pitch upon no better expedient than that of conſulting a poor ignorant ermite, who in all likelihood was as fit to be a ſecretary of ſtate, as to reſolve judiciouſly their queſtion, whether Auguſtin's doctrine or their own traditions were to be followed? For that was the important queſtion put to him.

G. But Sir, you do not reflect, that Bede calls him a holy and diſcreet man.

P. As to his holineſs and diſcretion in his own private conduct, I have nothing to ſay. But I dare boldly affirm, he was neither a prophet nor conjurer: and he ſufficiently ſhewed the narrowneſs of his capacity in the wretched advice he gave to his conſultors. For was it even agreeable to common ſenſe, that the final determination of three important points, beſides the reputation of a venerable archbiſhop over and above, ſhould be

hazarded upon the bare caſuality of a perſon's ſitting or ſtanding? Was that ground enough either for a rupture or union of the two churches, without entering any further into the bottom or merits of the cauſe?

G. But, Sir, the ermite was a very ſpiritual man, and judged according to the rules of the goſpel, that if Auguſtin was proud and haughty, he could not be of God; nor was his preaching then to be regarded. And what better mark could he give the Britiſh biſhops to judge by, whether he was humble or proud, than his riſing or not riſing to them?

P. Sir, the ermite was in the right in ſaying, that if Auguſtin was proud, he could not be of God. But as to your queſtion, what better mark he could give to the Britiſh biſhops to judge by, whether he was proud or humble? I anſwer directly, that his zeal for the converſion of ſouls, his diſintereſtedneſs, the auſterity of his life, his earneſt invitation of the Britons to be partakers with him in the glory of gaining ſouls to Chriſt; and laſtly his miracles were much better and ſurer marks of his ſolid virtue, which cannot be without humility, than the outward obſervance of a trivial ceremony: for a man may be very proud, though very ceremonious, and very humble without being ſo: ſo that I think it was no great mark of the ermite's ſpirituality, to direct his conſultors to paſs a peremptory judgment upon a man's inward diſpoſition, to the prejudice of his reputation, from an ambiguous outward mark; but to pronounce in ſuch an uncharitable manner upon a perſon of St. Auguſtin's character, that is, upon an archbiſhop, venerable for his extraordinary piety and zeal, and even working miracles, was wholly inexcuſable.

G. But

G. But perhaps the ermite knew nothing of St. Auguſtin's true character, or his having worked any miracles.

P. Either he did or did not. If he did, it is impoſſible to excuſe him from a grievous ſin in the advice he gave. If not, the Britiſh biſhops acted a very unfair part in concealing from him thoſe circumſtances, the knowledge whereof was abſolutely neceſſary to inform him of the true ſtate of the queſtion; as the concealment of them occaſioned in all likelihood his being trapaned into that ridiculous piece of caſuiſtry, which they made ſoon after the rule of their conduct.

But of what nature ſoever the ermite's overſight was in giving the aboveſaid advice: I am ſure the Britiſh biſhops were highly blameable in following it preferably to the avowed conviction of their judgments, that it was the true way of righteouſneſs which Auguſtin taught. For what need was there after that even to adviſe with any body, whether they ought to follow his doctrine, or adhere to their own traditions? Had they any colour of reaſon to doubt either of the holineſs of his life, or of the truth of his doctrine, after God had atteſted both the one and the other by the miracle they had been eye-witneſſes of? Or is there ſuch a chimera to be imagined, as a proud ſaint? Or is God wont to work miracles by the miniſtry of a proud and haughty perſon? Now it can ſcarce be queſtioned but theſe or ſuch like reflections occurred to their minds; and if they had not been ſtrangely prepoſſeſſed, it would have been obvious to conclude from them, that it was their duty to ſubmit to St. Auguſtin without any farther enquiry: or if they would needs out of curioſity hear, what the good ermite had to ſay to them, the holy and miraculous Auguſtin, whether

found ſitting or ſtanding ought moſt certainly to have been followed; at leaſt in the three articles, he inſiſted upon: the firſt whereof could ſcarce be rejected without the guilt of ſchiſm after the decree of the council of Nice. The ſecond was neceſſary to prevent ſcandalizing the new converts by their diſagreement in adminiſtring the ſacrament of baptiſm. And the third would have been highly conducing to God's honour and the converſion of ſouls.

G. However it was ſomewhat odd, that St. Auguſtin ſhould not riſe up at the approach of the Britiſh biſhops.

P. Let it be as odd as you pleaſe; it was moſt certainly a very raſh judgment in them to attribute it peremptorily to pride; and ſhewed they were diſpoſed rather to pick a new quarrel, than lay aſide their former animoſities. But for my part I do not ſee any thing ſo very odd in it, at leaſt as the fact is related by Bede, who is the original recorder of this hiſtorical paſſage. It happened, ſays he, that when they came, Auguſtin was ſitting in a chair. Which they obſerving were in a paſſion, and charging him with pride, endeavoured to contradict all he ſaid. What! did they expect that St. Auguſtin, wearied perhaps with walking to the place of conference, ſhould not have the liberty to reſt himſelf, but wait for them in a ſtanding poſture? for I obſerve that Bede does not ſay, that St. Auguſtin continued ſitting, when he ſaw them near enough to ſalute them, but he only ſays, that when they came he was ſitting; which expreſſion admits of a latitude of a greater or leſſer diſtance: and it is very poſſible that St. Auguſtin, whoſe mind was doubtleſs filled with a great many weighty objects, and perhaps in a deep contemplation, might through an innocent inadvertency not obſerve their coming towards him

him in the very moment, that they, who came as ſpies upon him, ſaw him ſitting. Nay the Britiſh biſhops had not temper enough to give him a few moments for reflection, but ſeeing him (perhaps at ſome diſtance, for the congreſs was in the open field under an oak) ſitting in a chair, fell immediately into a violent paſſion; and the firſt compliments they made him was to charge him with pride and haughtineſs: though the modeſt anſwer he made them, and his ſhewing no reſentment of their harſh language, might, I think, have ſufficed to give them a better opinion of him, if they had been capable of it. However let us ſuppoſe, that St. Auguſtin who had been brought up in a monaſtery, was not the politeſt man in the world, I hope at leaſt that every degree of impoliteneſs is not an infallible mark of pride, nor ſuffices to unſaint a man: which is a very material point in this queſtion; becauſe it is impoſſible for a proud man to be a ſaint.

But laſtly, let us ſuppoſe that St. Auguſtin (who doubtleſs thought himſelf the metropolitan and primate) was of opinion, that it became him to maintain the dignity of his character and the apoſtolic ſee, to which he was indebted for it, by that diſtinguiſhing mark of his ſuperiority, to wit, his receiving the Britiſh prelates ſitting: ſuppoſe, I ſay, that this was Auguſtin's opinion (for I will not preſume either to approve or condemn it) it is manifeſt that in this ſuppoſition his not riſing up to them was not an effect of pride, but at the very worſt an error of judgment. Whence I conclude in the whole, that the mark given by the ermite to judge by, whether Auguſtin was a proud or humble man, was in itſelf very equivocal, and ought not to have been laid hold of by the Britiſh prelates, who had much more ſolid grounds to form a judgment upon of his intrinſic merit.

G. But, Sir, what makes you ſolicitous to vindicate the honour of this great ſaint? Have any ancient hiſtorians ſpoken ill of him?

P. No, Sir; his memory was venerable in all antiquity both at home and abroad till the reforming age; when a violent hatred to the religion he had planted emboldened ſome ſhameleſs writers to draw their pen againſt him, and aſperſe both his miniſtry and perſon. "This Auguſtin "(ſays Holingſhead in Deſcript. Brit. C. 27. Col. "1.) after his arrival converted the Saxons in- "deed from paganiſm. But, as the proverb ſays, "bringing them out of God's bleſſing into the "warm ſun, he imbued them with no leſs hurt- "ful ſuperſtitions, than thoſe they were infected "with before. For beſides the bare name of "Chriſt, and external contempt of priſtinate ido- "latry, he taught them nothing at all; but ra- "ther made an exchange from groſs to ſubtle "treachery, from open to ſecret idolatry, and "from the name of pagans to the bare title of "Chriſtianity."

G. This is outragious indeed. For, according to this author, the heathen paganiſm profeſſed by the Saxons before their converſion, was comparatively at leaſt God's bleſſing; and the Chriſtianity taught by St. Auguſtin was but a mere empty name. So that all our Engliſh anceſtors for 900 years together were no Chriſtians; and it will be very hard to ſhew, by what means either Catholics or Proteſtants, are become Chriſtians ſince; or that there is ſuch a thing as a true Chriſtian in the world.

P. Have a little patience: I have a brace more of Proteſtant hiſtorians, not at all inferior to Holingſhead either for exactneſs in truth, or nicety of good manners; I mean, *honeſt* John Bale, and John Fox.

G. Pray

G. Pray what ſort of a man was the honeſt John Bale, you ſpeak of?

P. You ſhall have his character drawn in miniture by his own pen. When I was a boy of 12 years old (ſays he Cent. 5. fol. 245.) I was thrown into the helliſh dungeon [barathrum] of Carmelite friars in Norwich. I preſume he was put there to learn his catechiſm, or the rudiments of the Latin tongue. For no one was ever admitted to be a religious man at 12 years old.

G. But how did he get out of that terrible dungeon?

P. You ſhall hear. The word of God appearing (ſays he) I ſaw my own deformed ſtate. To wit, his being both a friar and a prieſt. I immediately ſcraped off the curſt character of the horrible beaſt, and took to myſelf a faithful wife named Dorothy, not from any man, nor by the help of any man (pray mark the prophaneneſs of his words) but by the ſpecial gift and word of Chriſt.

Here you have an eminent convert and champion of the reformation, throwing off his religious habit, renouncing his ſacred prieſthood, which he calls the curſed character of the horrible beaſt, and breaking through all the ſolemn vows he had made to God: and all this (I am aſhamed to repeat it) by the ſpecial gift and word of Chriſt. But you ſhall be acquainted with more of this ſort of converts hereafter.

This worthy gentleman therefore comes in as an evidence againſt St. Auguſtin, who indeed was never diſpoſed to ſcrape out the curſed character of the horrible beaſt, nor to take a faithful Dorothy to his bed. And it is perhaps one reaſon of the ſpleen John Bale bore him. For he tells us, that Auguſtin the Roman was ſent by Gregory the firſt to convert the Engliſh Saxons to the papiſtical faith. And again, that king Ethelbert at length received

received Popery with all it's ſuperſtitions; yet ſo, that every one ſhould receive this new worſhip of gods freely and without compulſion. So that St. Auguſtin is here made a teacher and worſhipper of many gods.

G. I am glad at leaſt to find him bear witneſs that St. Auguſtin was a Papiſt, and taught Popery. For it makes that religion above 900 years older than his own: and how black ſoever the colours are, in which he has repreſented it, I would rather chooſe to have my portion in the other world with Auguſtin, than with John Bale, and his moſt faithful Dorothy.

P. But pray hear out the reſt. For he tells us farther, that Auguſtin made himſelf archbiſhop by violence. That he was more ſolicitous to get tithes and oblations for maſſes than to preach the goſpel, and that he was the cauſe of the ſlaughter of 1200 monks. But here the poor fellow overſhot himſelf moſt grievouſly: not reflecting, that holy Bede, who knew St. Auguſtin's character much better than he could poſſibly do, gives him flatly the lie in every part of his ſtory; eſpecially as to the ſlaughter of the 1200 monks, which happened above a year after St. Auguſtin's death, and was ordered by a pagan king of the Northumbers, with whom St. Auguſtin never had the leaſt communication.

The third Proteſtant hiſtorian, that appears as an evidence both againſt St. Gregory, and our holy apoſtle, is John Fox: in whoſe writings father Parſons, who had examined them thoroughly, declares, that to ſpeak modeſtly there were at leaſt ten thouſand notorious lies, either expreſsly aſſerted or inſinuated. This vile author, (whoſe pen throws no ſcandal but on thoſe, whom he commends; in ſo much that to call a man one of Fox's ſaints, is proverbially become the ſame as

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to call him a great rogue) writes thus of St. Gregory: About this time departed Gregory, biſhop of Rome; of whom it is ſaid, that of the number of all the firſt biſhops before him in the primitive church, he was the baſeſt, and of all that came after him he was the beſt.

G. Baſeſt and beſt chime very prettily. But pray who is it that ſaid this of pope Gregory.

P. Do you aſk who ſaid it? Why, John Fox himſelf: And it is the only ſhift I can find to ſave him from a lie. For ſurely none but himſelf was ever ſo impertinent as to accuſe that eminent ſaint of baſeneſs. Much leſs to ſay, he was the baſeſt of all the firſt biſhops before him in the primitive church: Which compariſon reflects at leaſt a leſs degree of baſeneſs even on St. Peter himſelf, and all his holy ſucceſſors, who for 300 years together were all eminent ſaints, and almoſt all martyrs.

G. However John Fox has made St. Gregory ſome amends by ſaying, that of all who came after him he was the beſt.

P. That compliment was not intended to ſet off pope Gregory, but to make monſters of all his ſucceſſors. But ſee now in what beautiful colours he has painted St. Auguſtin, ſitting at the approach of the Britiſh biſhops. Much leſs, ſays he, would his phariſaical ſolemnity have girded himſelf, as Chriſt did, and waſh his brethren's feet after their journey. Seeing his lordſhip was ſo high, or rather ſo heavy, or rather ſo proud, that he could not find in his heart to give them a little moving of his body. Was there ever any thing more impertinent or ſcurrilous.

G. I hope at leaſt that Mr. Collier, whom you mentioned a while ago, does not join with theſe libellers in traducing our holy apoſtle.

P. No,

P. No, Sir, he is very far from it. On the contrary, he gives a very honourable character of him, as becomes a Chriſtian writer. As to St. Auguſtin's being found ſitting by the Britiſh biſhop, he neither condemns nor juſtifies it directly, but only anſwers Baronius's way of vindicating it; which, to deal ſincerely, I reliſh as little as Mr. Collier himſelf; and I heartily wiſh we agreed in all other things as much as in this.

But, to come now to an end of my hiſtorical account of this ſecond public converſion, the conference being thus ended, as you ſee, without ſucceſs, St. Auguſtin returned to his flock, comforted at leaſt with the conſciouſneſs of his own ſincere intentions, though fruſtrated by the perverſeneſs of thoſe he had to deal with. But he found the Kentiſh Saxons in a much more Chriſtian diſpoſition.

G. You have already told me, that king Ethelbert being converted and baptized, the whole kingdom of Kent ſoon after following his example, received the faith of Chriſt. But were the other ſix kingdoms of the heptarchy alſo favoured with the ſame bleſſing.

P. Yes, Sir, they all came into the fold one after another. I will give you a brief account of their converſion as near as I can according to the order of time. The eaſt Saxons were converted the firſt after the people of Kent by the preaching of St. Melitus, firſt biſhop of London. After them the eaſt-Angles principally by the preaching of their firſt biſhop Felix. The kingdom of the Northumbers was converted An. 625, by the preaching of St. Paulinus the firſt archbiſhop of York. That of the weſt-Saxons by the preaching of St. Berinus, and that of the Mercians or midland counties, the largeſt of all the ſeven, about the ſame time under king Peda, who was baptized

tized by Biſhop Finian during the life and againſt the will of his Father Pedna; being perſuaded to it by Oſwin, king of the Northumbers, who gave him his daughter in marriage upon condition that he would embrace the faith of Chriſt. And thus ſix kingdoms of the heptarchy, were converted within about 40 years more or leſs after St. Auguſtin's coming into England. But the 7th, to wit, that of the ſouth-Saxons did not receive the goſpel till about 20 years after under king Ethelwold, chiefly by the preaching of St. Wilfrid their firſt biſhop.

G. I preſume then that St. Auguſtin did not live to ſee the converſion of the whole Engliſh nation.

P. No, Sir, he died in the year 608; and was buried firſt near the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Canterbury; becauſe it was not then quite finiſhed. But as ſoon as it was finiſhed and conſecrated, his body was brought into the church, and decently buried in the northern porch, with an honourable inſcription upon it. I ſhall conclude with Mr. Collier's character of him.

"To ſpeak a word or two of him (ſays he) by "way of character; he was a very graceful per- "ſon, lived ſuitably to the buſineſs of a miſſio- "ner, and practiſed great auſterities. And if he "fell into any inequalities of temper; if he was "too warm in his expoſtulations, or ſtrained his "privilege too far upon the Britons, it ought to "be charged upon the ſcore of human infirmi- "ties, and covered with his greater merit. This "is certain, he engaged in a glorious undertak- "ing, broke through danger and diſcourage- "ment, and was bleſſed with wonderful ſucceſs. "He converted the kingdom of Kent by the "ſtrength of his own conduct and miracles; "and that of the eaſt-Saxons by his agent and "coadjutor

" coadjutor Melitus. The ſpreading of Chriſtia-
" nity thus far among the Saxons was a great ſtep
" towards the converſion of the reſt. Let his
" memory therefore be mentioned with honour;
" and let us praiſe Almighty God for making
" him ſo powerful an inſtrument in the happineſs
" of this iſland. L. 2. p. 78."

Thus, Sir, I have given you as compendious a relation as was poſſible of this celebrated converſion of our country; begun about the end of the 6th century, and perfected not long after the middle of the next.

G. Sir, I have hearkened to you both with attention and pleaſure, and laid up in my memory all the principal heads of your relation. But is it not ſomewhat ſurprizing that Mr. Collier ſhould not only own, that St. Auguſtin converted the kingdom of Kent by the force of miracles, but even regard the religion, to which it was converted by him, as the happineſs of this iſland? For did God ever concur by ſupernatural ſigns and wonders, to the ſetting up of a falſe religion? Or can a falſe religion be the happineſs of any nation? It is therefore manifeſt that Mr. Collier is convinced in his heart, that St. Auguſtin and his followers preached the true faith in this iſland.

SECT. 7.

ROMAN CATHOLICS profeſs to this Day the Faith, which ST. AUGUSTIN preached.

P. THE conſequence, which you draw from his words is inconteſtable: and I ſhall only draw one conſequence more; viz. That the faith and religion profeſſed at this time by the Engliſh Roman Catholics, cannot but be the true one, if it be the ſame as was taught by St. Auguſtin: Becauſe it is impoſſible that the ſame Chriſtian

Chriſtian faith ſhall be true in one age, and falſe in another.

G. But does Mr. Collier allow, that the faith and religion profeſſed at this time by the Engliſh Roman Catholics is the ſame as was taught by St. Auguſtin?

P. No, Sir, he ſtrains hard to ſhew the contrary. But he has not only all Catholic hiſtorians, but a whole crowd of Proteſtant witneſſes againſt him: amongſt which, though ſome indeed expreſs themſelves ſomewhat more politely than Holingſhead, Bale, and Fox, yet they all agree in ſubſtance, that Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners brought Popery into England; and the book of Homilies, recommended by the 37th article of Mr. Collier's church, declares poſitively that before the reformation whole Chriſtendom was drowned in abominable idolatry, and that for the ſpace of eight hundred years and more. Which in Proteſtant language brings Popery not only in Great Britain, but in whole Chriſtendom, up to the very time of England's converſion.

But let us hear his reaſons againſt it. He writes thus, L. 2. p. 65: "Baronius in tranſcribing "this paſſage of Bede [relating to St. Auguſtin's "having a ſilver croſs together with the picture "of our Saviour for a banner carried before him] "falls into ſome tragical reflections upon the "condition of the modern church of England. "He repreſents the caſe, as if the Engliſh in "this time had in a manner apoſtatized from "Chriſtianity, and turned monſters in belief. "But with due reſpect to the cardinal's memory, "his declaration runs ſtrangely upon miſapplication."

Under Mr. Colliers's favour, I cannot believe, Baronius thought the Engliſh church had apoſtatized from Chriſtianity. Though I do not queſtion

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but he thought ſhe had apoſtatized from Catholicity; which ſufficed to make him lament her condition without any miſapplication: Becauſe the thing he lamented was, that they, who had been zealous Catholics for many ages, were then fallen into hereſy and ſchiſm by their ſeparation from their mother-church. And if Mr. Collier will needs dignify ſuch as theſe with the name of monſters, he is free to do as he pleaſes. He goes on thus, to prove that Baronius's lamentation runs upon miſapplication:

" For (ſays he) the terms of communion ſtand by no means upon the ſame foot they did in Gregory the Great's time," ib.

This is Mr. Collier's poſition: Which, without any ſtraining or miſconſtruction, implies no leſs, than that he has no exception againſt ſuch articles of our faith, as were terms of communion in pope Gregory's time. But then he muſt be content to go to Maſs with us: Nay he is bound to do it, becauſe the belief of the Maſs was unqueſtionably a term of communion in the time of Gregory the Great. The thing is notoriouſly known, and Mr. Collier cannot have the confidence to deny it. So I ſhall go no farther in queſt for a proof than the fact already quoted by Bede, viz. That St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners, after their coming to Canterbury, began firſt to meet, ſing, and ſay Maſs in an old neighbouring chapel dedicated to the honour of St. Martin. I obſerve indeed that Mr. Collier, in his relation of this hiſtorical paſſage, inſtead of *ſay* Maſs (which are a true and verbal tranſlation of Bede's words, whom he quotes in the margin) has rendered it thus: And *performed* all the ſolemn offices of religion, p. 67. He knows beſt himſelf what reaſon he had to do ſo. But I think it was not fair to wrap

wrap up a fact of moment thus clearly ſpecified, in ſuch general and ambiguous terms, as might ſignify the Proteſtant office as well as the Maſs.

Holy Bede has likewiſe told us, that pope Gregory took care to ſend over into England all things neceſſary for the ſervice of the church, as ſacred veſſels, ornaments for altars, veſtments for prieſts, reliques of the holy apoſtles and martyrs, &c. and gave directions how the heathen temples ſhould be converted into Chriſtian churches; to wit, by ſprinkling them with holy water, by erecting altars, and placing in them the reliques of the ſaints in whoſe honour they were to be conſecrated.

Now all this is as plain Popery as ever was practiſed: And if Mr. Collier will but ſtand to the terms of communion, as they were in pope Gregory's time, and profeſs himſelf as true a Papiſt as that great prelate and St. Auguſtin were, I will anſwer for him, that there will not be a truer Papiſt than himſelf in Great Britain. The thing is manifeſt as to the aboveſaid articles relating to the ſacrifice of the Maſs, the uſe of holy water, the religious honour paid to images and pictures, and the reſpect and veneration paid not only to the ſaints themſelves, by dedicating churches in honour of them, but even to their reliques. Beſides that nothing is more certain than St. Gregory's belief of a purgatory, or middle ſtate of ſouls: And that this doctrine was preached by St. Auguſtin, and his immediate ſucceſſors, is apparent from the many early pious foundations made in all parts of this kingdom, for the maintenance of prieſts to pray and offer up the holy ſacrifice of the Maſs for the ſouls of their reſpective founders. And it is to be obſerved, that Aerius and Vigilantius were condemned by the church as hereticks, in the 4th age, about 200 years before

St.

St. Gregory; the one for oppoſing the doctrine of purgatory, and the other for holding that all prayers made to ſaints deceaſed were fruitleſs and in vain, that no honour was to be paid them, and that to give any reſpect to their reliques was downright idolatry.

It is therefore plain, that theſe three articles concerning purgatory, invoking the ſaints, and paying a religious reſpect to their reliques, were terms of communion in St. Gregory's time, ſince the tenets contrary to them had been condemned as hereſies long before; and therefore Mr. Collier muſt own, that at the beginning of the reformation the Roman Catholics of Great Britain had been in quiet poſſeſſion of theſe and the other aboveſaid articles for above 900 years; and that by conſequence, the terms of communion are upon the ſame foot now as they were in pope Gregory's time, reſpectively to all thoſe articles.

G. But what then are the articles, which Mr. Collier excepts againſt?

P. You ſhall have them in his own words. For having laid down this general poſition, that the terms of communion ſtand by no means upon the ſame foot they did in Gregory's time, he goes on thus:

" To give an inſtance or two from the matter " before us; Baronius here takes notice, that " Auguſtin, the Engliſh apoſtle, was a monk, and " that the reſt of the miſſioners were of the ſame " order. That they appeared at their audience, " and made their entrance into Canterbury with " the croſs, and the picture of our Saviour, car- " ried before them, and then complains that theſe " things were all forgotten and laid aſide by the " modern Engliſh.

" To ſpeak to this charge by parts, it may " be replied in the firſt place as to the monaſtick " life,

" life, the church of England has not declared " againſt it in any of her articles. Beſides the " cardinal may remember, that the diſſolution " of abbeys here was an act of the ſtate and not " of the church; that is was prior to the reforma- " tion, and carried on by the prince and parlia- " ment of the Roman communion in all points ex- " cepting the ſupremacy."

But with Mr. Collier's good leave, though human politics entered as a principal motive in the diſſolution of abbeys, yet it was more properly an act of the church than of the ſtate. Becauſe viſiting, reforming, and diſſolving religious houſes, is moſt certainly an exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction. Beſides that the diſſolution of them was commanded by king Henry not as temporal ſovereign in his own dominions, but as ſupreme head of the church of England in ſpirituals; and executed by Thomas Cromwell not as acting in a lay capacity, but as the kings vicar general in all eccleſiaſtical affairs. Neither was the diſſolution of abbeys wholly prior to the reformation, as Mr. Collier is pleaſed to tell us. Unleſs he means that it was prior to the reformation in the reign of Edward VI. and queen Elizabeth. But was not the diſcarding of the pope, and veſting the ſpiritual ſupremacy in the crown a part of the reformation? I think it was the very capital branch of it in all the three reforming reigns; and in the reign of Henry VIII. made the firſt ſeparation of the church of England from the church of Rome. Now the diſſolution of abbeys, was not prior to this part of the reformation, but the firſt fruit of it, and by conſequence, poſterior to it.

But, ſays Mr. Collier, it was carried on by the prince and parliament of the Roman communion in all points excepting the ſupremacy. But this exception ſpoils all. For no man was ever acknowledged

ledged to be a member of the church of Rome, who denied the pope's ſupremacy. And ſo it is plain, that the prince and parliament, whatever communion they were of, were not in the communion of the Roman Catholic church, when having ſeparated themſelves from the ſupreme head of it, they joined together in the plunder and diſſolution of religious houſes. Mr. Collier continues thus.

" Secondly, as to the croſs and our Saviour's " picture, the church of England has a great re- " gard to both of them [witneſs, queen Elizabeth's not leaving a public croſs or crucifix ſtanding in the whole kingdom] " and makes uſe " of the firſt in the ſolemn adminiſtration of bap- " tiſm. It is true we dare not carry our reſpects " to the lengths of the church of Rome. And if " we examine this paſſage in Bede, though we find " St. Auguſtin and his company carry the croſs " and our Saviour's picture in their proceſſion, " yet there is not the leaſt intimation that they " worſhiped them. Nay it is plain, that image- " worſhip was none of the doctrine of Rome in " that age. For Gregory the great determines " flatly againſt it. It is in his letter to Serinus " biſhop of Marſeilles."

G. I am glad at leaſt to hear Mr. Collier declare, that the church of England has a great regard to the croſs and picture of our Saviour. For the ſmaller the breach is, the more eaſily it is made up. However the nakedneſs of Proteſtant churches ſeems to ſpeak another language. For I have ſeen indeed the pictures of Moſes and Aaron in ſome of them: but never found a crucifix or picture of our Saviour in any. Nor have I ever ſeen a Proteſtant bleſs himſelf with the ſign of the croſs, but have ſeen thoſe laughed at, who by inadvertency have done it in Proteſtant company.

P. Sir,

P. Sir, it was the practice of Chriſtians above fourteen hundred years ago to bleſs themſelves upon all occaſions with the ſign of the croſs: witneſs Tertullian, who writes thus *L. de corona Militis*, C. 3. At every ſtep and motion, at our coming in and going out, when we put on our clothes or ſhoes; when we waſh, ſit down to table, light candles, go to bed, ſit down, or whatever employment we are about, we make the ſign of the croſs on our foreheads. This was the ancient practice, but it is regarded as an unfaſhionable thing, or ſuperſtitious cuſtom in the Proteſtant churches.

G. I find indeed that Papiſts alone keep up the old mode. But what does Mr. Collier mean by his ſaying, that Proteſtants dare not carry their reſpects to the lengths of the church of Rome? And that there is not the leaſt inſinuation in Bede, that St. Auguſtin and his company worſhipped the croſs and picture of our Saviour?

P. Truly, Sir, I know not what he means. But this I am ſure of, that if he means to inſinuate, that we pay an idolatrous worſhip to images and pictures, he wrongs us moſt grievouſly, and I fear his own conſcience into the bargain. For a man of his learning cannot be ignorant, what our true and real doctrine is in reference to the matter before us. It is thus delivered in pope Pius's profeſſion of faith from the very words of the council of Trent, Seſſ. 25. I moſt firmly hold that the images or pictures of Chriſt, of the bleſſed Mother of God always a Virgin, and of other Saints, ought to be kept and reſerved, and that a due honour and veneration ought to be given them. This and no more is the true ſtandard of our faith in reference to the point in queſtion. And as it is thus ſtated, it has been a term of communion ever ſince the Manichees began to ſhew themſelves profeſſed enemies of holy pictures, that is, ſome ages before

fore St. Gregory's time. So that whatever Mr. Collier out of his abundance of charity towards us is pleaſed to add to this, is all his own: For we utterly diſclaim it and proteſt againſt it. And if this will not ſuffice to clear us from the imputation of paying an idolatrous worſhip to images and pictures, I know not what can poſſibly do it. I dare therefore confidently aſſure Mr. Collier, that he may with the ſame ſafety of conſcience carry his reſpects for thoſe pious objects to the lengths of the church of Rome, as he kiſſes the bible, or bows to the communion table, or to the venerable name of Jeſus: or finally, as he keeps holy days in honour of ſaints departed: all which are undoubtedly religious reſpects, as being paid upon a religious motive, and ultimately referred to God himſelf. And of this nature was the religious devotion, which St. Auguſtin and his company paid to the croſs and picture of our Saviour, when it was carried as a banner before them.

It is very true indeed, that there is not the leaſt intimation in Bede that they worſhiped it. And God forbid there ſhould be any ſuch intimation; if by the word worſhip (the ambiguous ſignification whereof is of wonderful uſe to Proteſtants in this controverſy) if, I ſay, Mr. Collier is pleaſed to mean the ſame, as paying divine honours to it. This, indeed, is not intimated by Bede. But the relation of the very fact before us is more than a bare intimation, that they paid a religious devotion to it; this being wholly inſeparable from their carrying it in a religious proceſſion as a banner before them. For I preſume Mr. Collier will not deny, that when in our ſolemn proceſſions abroad, we have the croſs, and the reliques and pictures of ſaints carried before us, we intend to pay a religious honour to them by ſo doing. And ſo did, without all diſpute, St. Auguſtin and his company,

company, who by their example introduced that form of devotion into this iſland.

But ſuppoſe they had proſtrated themſelves before the croſs or picture of Chriſt, or bowed down to it, or kiſſed it, as we yearly do in a ſolemn manner upon Good Friday, to teſtify our gratitude to Chriſt for having died on the croſs for us: if Mr. Collier will needs call this worſhipping, then he is a worſhipper of the communion table, when he bows down to it, and of the bible, when he kiſſes it, and of the ſacramental bread and wine, when he kneels down out of reſpect before it; and ſo he carries his reſpects for holy things of the ſame created nature as a croſs or picture, to all the lengths of the church of Rome; and our paying a due honour and veneration to ſuch things, let him call it by what name he pleaſes, is a term of communion he cannot reaſonably ſcruple at.

G. But Mr. Collier farther tells us, that image-worſhip was ſo far from being the doctrine of Rome in pope Gregory's time, that he determines flatly againſt it in his letter to Serinus biſhop of Marſeilles.

P. Sir, pope Gregory writes nothing in that letter, but what every Roman Catholic in the world will ſubſcribe to. It appears from it, that the people at Marſeilles had effectually carried their devotion to the pictures hung up in their churches, even to a criminal exceſs, as St. Gregory calls it. Which, therefore, is at leaſt an unanſwerable proof, that holy images and pictures were not only kept in churches, but a religious honour was paid to them long before that time. For people do not uſually come to exceſſes all on a ſudden, but paſs gradually and by ſteps from the moderate uſe of things to an abuſe of them, when that happens to be the caſe. However the biſhop of the place being made ſenſible of theſe

abuſes, commanded the church-pictures to be broken and thrown away. Whereupon St. Gregory wrote to him, and commended indeed his zeal in endeavouring to reform the exceſſes the people had run into, but blamed the methods he had taken in order to it. And in another letter to the ſame biſhop quoted by Mr. Collier, after having expreſſed his diſlike of the biſhop's breaking the pictures, he writes thus. "In ſhort, (ſays he) let no ſtatuary, "or painter, be diſcouraged in his profeſſion; but "take all imaginable care that nothing made by "them may be honoured to adoration. Thus by "this temper the underſtandings of the unlearned "may be inſtructed, and their affections warmed "at the ſight of church-pictures, and our wor-"ſhip at the ſame time be all of it referred to God, "and directed to the holy Trinity."

Now it is plain from theſe words of St. Gregory, that the people of Marſeilles were fallen into ſuch criminal exceſſes, as to give that honour and adoration to pictures, which is due only to God and the bleſſed Trinity. And Mr. Collier has the charity to apply this to us, and repreſent the church of Rome as guilty of the ſame criminal exceſſes, which pope Gregory condemned in the people of Marſeilles. For otherwiſe it is nonſenſe in him to ſay, that pope Gregory has in the above-ſaid letters determined the matter flatly againſt us. I heartily pray God to forgive him and his brethren the injuſtice they continually do us in their miſrepreſentations of our doctrine.

Mr. Collier's ſecond inſtance to prove, That the terms of communion are not upon the ſame foot now, as they were in St. Gregory's time, is, becauſe that pope, ſays he, p. 66. did not carry the ſupremacy up to the pretenſions ſince inſiſted on by the court of Rome.

I anſwer,

I anſwer, firſt, that the queſtion is not concerning the court of Rome, but the faith of the church in communion with the ſee of Rome: which are two very different things. For I hope that by the grace of God, I ſhall always live and die a true member of the church of Rome, though I never did, nor ever was, ambitious to belong to the court of Rome.

I anſwer 2dly, that if Mr. Collier ſpeaks of pretenſions, for example, to infallibility, or the depoſing power, they neither are now, nor ever were terms of communion. And ſo it is wholly wide from the purpoſe, whether St. Gregory did or did not not carry the ſupremacy up to thoſe pretenſions. Or if Mr. Collier only hints at real or ſuppoſed encroachments of the pope upon the privileges of particular churches, I do not find it was ever looked upon as a breach of communion to oppoſe him in ſuch caſes.

But that St. Gregory maintained the divine right of his ſupremacy over the whole church as vigorouſly as any pope ever did, is manifeſt from his own words. For (L. 11. Epiſt. 56. vet edit.) he writes thus concerning a biſhop who pretended to be exempted from the juriſdiction of his metropolitan. If it be pretended (ſays he) that the biſhop has neither a metropolitan nor patriarch, I anſwer then that his cauſe is to be heard and decided by the ſee apoſtolic, which is the head of all churches. This ſurely is plain and deciſive. Again, he writes thus to the biſhop of Syracuſa, L. 9. Epiſt. 59. As to what they write of the church of Conſtantinople; who doubts but that it is ſubject to the ſee apoſtolic? Now Conſtantinople was not ſubject to the biſhop of Rome, either as it's metropolitan or patriarch. Since therefore St. Gregory thought it ſubject to him, he muſt neceſſarily believe, that his ſee had a ſpiritual ſupremacy over

the whole church. And the belief of this, with Mr. Collier's good leave, was a term of communion in pope Gregory's time, as well as it is now.

G. What you have ſaid amounts to an unanſwerable proof, that the belief of the pope's ſupremacy, as it is a term of communion, ſtands upon the ſame foot now, as it did in pope Gregory's time. But I ſhould be glad to hear what proof Mr. Collier has alledged againſt it.

P. After having ſaid, that St. Gregory did not carry the ſupremacy up to the pretenſions ſince inſiſted on by the court of Rome, he goes on thus: "This we fairly collect from his complaint againſt "John, biſhop of Conſtantinople, for taking the "title of univerſal biſhop upon him. This in "in his letter to Conſtantia, the empreſs, he in-"veighs againſt as great pride and preſumption "in his brother and fellow-biſhop, John. He "declares againſt this haughty title as a contra-"diction to the tenor of the goſpel, an infrac-"tion of the canons, and an injury to the whole "Catholic church."

Thus Mr. Collier: And the fact is unqueſtionable; to wit, that St. Gregory in ſeveral letters, complains bitterly of John's taking upon him the haughty title of univerſal patriarch; which he even calls a luciferian pride: and he was ſo far from aſſuming it to himſelf, that he only ſtiled himſelf in his letters, the ſervant of the ſervants of God. But I am ſomewhat ſurprized to find Mr. Collier ſtep out of his way, and interrupted the courſe of his hiſtory to pick up an argument, that has long ſince been worn thread-bare by an hundred repetitions of it, and as many anſwers to it. I ſhall therefore be very brief in mine, which is grounded upon Monſ. Du Pin's ſhort relation of this matter, Cent. 6. p. 67. where he tells

tells us, that John of Capadocia, ſirnamed the faſter, was ſharply reprehended by St. Gregory for taking upon him the title of univerſal patriarch: becauſe this pope looked upon this title as a mark of ambition: though in the ſenſe of the Greeks it was innocent, and ſignified nothing leſs than what St. Gregory thought.

However as that ſaint underſtood it, the title was unjuſtifiable on ſeveral accounts. Firſt, becauſe it ſeemed to import a juriſdiction over the whole church, which did not belong to the biſhop of Conſtantinople, nor was indeed challenged by him. And 2dly, becauſe it ſeemed to import that he was the only biſhop in the world; or at leaſt, that all other biſhops were but his deputies and vicars; a dignity belonging to Chriſt alone. St. Gregory at leaſt underſtood it ſo, as appears from his own writings, and particularly from his words to the empreſs Conſtantia, to whom he complains thus. It is a lamentable thing, ſays he, to be forced to bear, that my brother and fellow-biſhop, John, deſpiſing all others, endeavours to be called the only biſhop. L. 5. Ep. 20.

Hence it is plain, that Mr. Collier's argument to prove his point is wholly inconcluſive. For it run thus: pope Gregory rejected the title of univerſal biſhop, ergo, he did not carry the ſupremacy up to the pretenſions ſince inſiſted on by the popes. This I ſay, is inconcluſive; becauſe no pope in any age ever took upon him the title of univerſal biſhop in the ſenſe that it was inveighed againſt and rejected by St. Gregory. For if any pope had ever declared himſelf to be the univerſal biſhop in ſuch a manner, as to regard all other biſhops as no better than his deputies or vicars, I am of opinion he would have ſoon heard of it, and found by experience, that he had reckoned without his hoſt. But if by the title of univerſal biſhop no

more be meant, than a ſuperintendency over the univerſal church of Chriſt belonging by divine right to the ſucceſſors of St. Peter, this title never was rejected, but always vigorouſly maintained by St. Gregory, as is evident from the paſſages I have quoted from him. Whence I conclude that the ſupremacy, conſidered as a term of communion, ſtands upon the ſame foot now, as it did in pope Gregory's time: and ſo I ſhall always inſiſt upon it as an inconteſtable truth, that Roman Catholics not only continue now in the religion, which was profeſſed by the whole Engliſh nation in the 16th century before the apoſtacy of Hen. VIII. but likewiſe profeſs to this day the faith, which St. Auguſtin preached. Becauſe it is impoſſible to prove from any authentic hiſtory, that there happened any change in the public faith of the Engliſh church from its converſion under the Saxon kings till the pretended reformation. In all which ſpace of time our forefathers (ſays a Proteſtant writer) were all Papiſts with a vengeance: unleſs ſometimes a few lollards ſtarted up, who were far liker the diſciples of Fox and Naylor, than members of the true Proteſtant religion.

G. But, Sir, what will it avail us to bring our religion as high as the end of the 6th century, unleſs we can alſo find it in the primitive ages? I therefore deſire to be ſatisfied in this point, to wit, whether the faith preached to the Saxons by St. Auguſtin was the ſame, as had been preached to the Britons 400 years before by Fugatius and Damianus.

SECT.

SECT. 8.

The SAME FAITH was preached to the SAXONS, as had been preached four hundred Years before to the BRITONS.

P. SIR, the anſwer to your queſtion will oblige me to clear a point of no ſmall importance. For ſince I have now proved that the religion profeſſed to this day by the Engliſh Roman Catholics is the very ſame as St. Auguſtin preached to the Saxons; if it be made clear that the faith preached by that holy biſhop to the Saxons, was the ſame as had been preached to the Britons 400 years before by St. Fugatius and Damianus; two undeniable conſequences will follow, viz. firſt, that the faith now profeſſed by Roman Catholics was the faith of the ſecond century; that is, the ancient and primitive faith. And 2dly, that the Proteſtant churches is an innovation of that faith in all dogmatical points, wherein it differs from the church of Rome.

G. I plainly ſee theſe conſequences will follow, if it can be proved, that the Britons and Saxons received the ſame faith at their converſion.

P. Firſt then, I prove it from this undeniable fact, to wit, that the Britons as well as Saxons were converted by miſſioners ſent from Rome; the former by St. Fugatius and Damianus ſent into Britain by pope Eleutherius; and the latter by St. Auguſtin, and his company, ſent thither by pope Gregory the great.

G. But what is that to the purpoſe? For cannot a country at different times receive different religions from the ſame place, if that place changes it's faith.

P. Yes, Sir, it may. But then it muſt be proved from unqueſtionable hiſtorical facts, that Rome changed it's faith in the interval of time

between the converſion of the Britons and that of the Saxons. For otherwiſe a man muſt be void of all modeſty to aſſert it, and of ſenſe to believe it.

Let us ſuppoſe a man ſhould pretend to maintain, that the primacy of the ſee of Canterbury is an innovation introduced into the Engliſh church five or ſix ages after the converſion of the Saxons; ſuppoſe, I ſay, any one ſhould pretend to maintain this, would he not be looked upon as an errant trifler, unleſs he produced undeniable hiſtorical facts to ſupport his aſſertion? And why ſo? Becauſe ſuch an innovation, joined with the circumſtances, that muſt have attended it, could not, morally ſpeaking, have eſcaped being recorded in ſome authentic hiſtory of the time in which it happened. And if no ſuch hiſtory can be produced, this univerſal ſilence amounts to a moral demonſtration, that there never was any ſuch innovation; and is a full confutation of any man, that ſhould have the confidence to impoſe it for a truth, upon the credulity of ignorant people.

In like manner therefore it ſuffices not barely to ſay, as John Fox does, that the faith of Rome was not the ſame in pope Gregory's time, as it was in the time of pope Eleutherius; but whoever will pretend to make good this bold aſſertion, muſt produce plain and undeniable hiſtorical facts to prove, that there was a change of faith in Rome, between the ſecond and ſixth century; and to render this credible, he muſt deſcend to particularities, and ſpecify the moſt remarkable circumſtances of it; as in what age, and, under what popes and emperors it happened; who were chief promoters or oppoſers of it; what diſturbances it cauſed; what books were writ for or againſt it, and what ſynods were called to approve or condemn it. For theſe are the conſtant and natural effects of

of changes in religion; and if any ſuch changes had really been at Rome in the interval of time between the pontificates of pope Eleutherius and pope Gregory, it is as incredible as the moſt palpable of fictions, that they ſhould not appear upon record, attended with all the material circumſtances belonging to them in every hiſtory writ in in or about the time, which produced thoſe changes.

Nay, the bold aſſertors of theſe pretended innovations muſt likewiſe inform us very particularly, who was the firſt pope, that laid claim to the ſupremacy: who it was that introduced the invocation of ſaints, the veneration of their relics, the honouring of pious images and pictures, and praying for the ſouls departed. But above all they muſt let us know, who was the firſt pope that ſaid Maſs. For if this was an innovation, it was one of ſuch an extraordinary nature, that no hiſtorian could poſſibly be ignorant either of it's beginning, progreſs, or full eſtabliſhment in the church of Rome.

However we are very ſure, that St. Gregory was a Maſſing pope, and claimed the ſupremacy over the whole church. And we are no leſs ſure (as has been fully ſhewed) that the church of Rome was in his time in a full and quiet poſſeſſion of all the other aboveſaid popiſh articles. If therefore all theſe were innovations brought in between the ſecond and ſixth century; if there was no Maſs ſaid at Rome in the days of Eleutherius; if that pope was not acknowledged ſupreme head of the church, if in his time there was no invocation of ſaints, no honour paid to their reliques, no praying for the dead; in a word, if Proteſtancy was the religion of Rome in thoſe days (for that muſt have been the ſtate of religion in Rome before the ſuppoſed change) I muſt make bold to

demand a particular account taken from good records and authentic hiſtory, how Proteſtancy (as it is now called) came to be entirely baniſhed the city, and Popery ſet up in it's place before the end of the ſixth century? For if no good records or authentic hiſtorian be produced to prove this wonderful metamorphoſis of religion in the moſt famous city of the world, no rational man can poſſibly believe it: becauſe there is no example of a buſineſs of that importance tranſacted upon ſo noble a theatre as the city of Rome, without being mentioned, nay particularized in every circumſtance by ſome hiſtorian of note.

G. I muſt needs own, it looks more like a romance or poetical fiction than a real truth, that ſuch a revolution in the public faith and religion of the metropolis of the world ſhould happen without being tranſmitted to poſterity even in all the hiſtories of the time, in which it happened.

P. However this is not all. For it is an undeniable truth, that whole Chriſtendom was in communion with pope Eleutherius in the end of the ſecond century, and with pope Gregory in the end of the ſixth: excepting ſome ſcattered remains of hereſies condemned in the four firſt general councils. Whence it follows, that the pretended change of religion was not only in the city of Rome, but throughout whole Chriſtendom both in the eaſt and weſt. For no pope ever communicated with a nation that openly profeſſed a different religion from his own. So that we muſt ſuppoſe, that the univerſal church in communion with pope Eleutherius being ſtaunch Proteſtants in the ſecond century, were all turned rank Papiſts before the end of the ſixth. It is this chimerical ſuppoſition they are bound to maintain, who aſſert that the faith of Rome was not the ſame in

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pope Gregory's time, as it was in the early days of Eleutherius, to whoſe zeal the Britons owed their converſion.

But this wonderful change of whole Chriſtendom from the religion now called Proteſtancy, to that which is now nick-named Popery, is either recorded in ſome ancient hiſtory, or it is not. If not; by what means have the bold aſſerters of it come fairly and honeſtly to the knowledge of it? For I ſhould be apt to ſuſpect they had dealt in the black art, and conjured up ſome ſpirit to inform them of what had paſſed in reference to the pretended innovations during the four ages between pope Eleutherius and Gregory the great. But if it be recorded in any ancient hiſtory, (as it muſt undoubtedly be, if it happened at all) I deſire to know when, and by what methods this ſtupendous revolution in the univerſal church was brought to paſs? As, whether it was done clandeſtinely or openly; whether by violence or fraud? Whether whole Chriſtendom was bribed or bullied into this ſtrange apoſtacy from its ancient religion? Whether it was compaſſed all at once, or by degrees, and whether it met with any oppoſition or not? When theſe few queſtions are clearly anſwered, I ſhall have double the number ready for any one, that is diſpoſed to undertake that taſk.

G. I fear indeed there will not be many pretenders to it. For I perceive there lie objections in ambuſcade, to what ſide ſoever the anſwerer ſhall turn himſelf.

P. I believe indeed he will meet with ſome rubs in his way. But I will now briefly ſhew the utter improbability of any ſuch change in the faith of Rome from the ſilence of the four firſt general councils; which are all received as true and orthodox councils by the church of England, and were all four held in the interval of time between

pope

pope Eleutherius and Gregory the great: the firſt An. 325, and the laſt of the four An. 451, which was about 250 years after the converſion of the Britons, and but 150 years before the converſion of the Saxons.

Now if the pretended changes in the ancient faith of Rome, happened at any time between the pontificate of pope Eleutherius, and the fourth general council, it is altogether incredible, that not one of thoſe auguſt and orthodox aſſemblies ſhould take any notice of ſuch monſtrous innovations, as they muſt be ſuppoſed to have been. On the contrary it cannot be queſtioned, but they would have exerted themſelves as vigorouſly againſt thoſe pernicious novelties and errors, as they did againſt the new-broached hereſies of the Arians, Macedonians, Neſtorians, Eutychians, and other heretics of thoſe times. Since therefore it is plain fact, that not one of thoſe four councils impeached the church of Rome of any error or novelty in faith, is a demonſtrative proof, that no pope or popes, between pope Eleutherius and the fourth general council, had made any innovations in the ancient faith of the church.

G. But was there any other general council held before pope Gregory?

P. Yes, Sir, the fifth, or ſecond of Conſtantinople was held an hundred and two years after the fourth; that is about the middle of the age, in which St. Gregory was choſen pope. And this, though held as the firſt of that name, in the very metropolis of the eaſt, which always regarded the ſee of Rome with a kind of jealous eye, had as little to object againſt that ſee on the ſcore of errors and novelties of faith, as any of the four former councils: all which put together proves demonſtratively that the church of Rome was not then guilty of any: and it follows from it, by an undeniable

undeniable conſequence, that there had been no innovations made in the faith of that church from the time of pope Eleutherius, who ſent miſſioners to inſtruct the Britons, to that of pope Gregory, who ſent St. Auguſtin to convert the Saxons. Whence it follows again, that the faith preached by St. Auguſtin to the Saxons was the ſame as had been preached 400 years before to the Britons, by St. Fugatius and Damianus: which is preciſely the point I have undertaken to prove. Becauſe this brings the Roman Catholic faith up to the very primitive ages, and at the ſame time ſhews, that all the Proteſtant articles of religion, as far as they are contrary to that faith, are truly novelties introduced into England by the pretended reformation.

But I ſhall now paſs to a ſecond proof of the point we have before us, grounded upon Bede's relation of the conference between St. Auguſtin and the Britiſh biſhops; by which we are informed, that he only required of them a conformity in three things, viz. 1. In keeping Eaſter at it's due time. 2dly, In adminiſtering baptiſm according to the manner uſed in the church of Rome. And 3dly, in preaching with him the word of God to the Saxons. Upon which he promiſed to tolerate many other practices, not ſpecified by holy Bede, though differing from the cuſtoms of the church of Rome.

Hence it appears evident to me, that the Britons were not of the Proteſtant religion in any of thoſe doctrinal points, which are now controverted between us and the Proteſtant churches; but that on the contrary they agreed with St. Auguſtin in all thoſe points. Becauſe nothing can be more improbable than that he ſhould importune them, as he did, to be fellow-labourers with him in preaching to the Saxons, if their faith and religion

gion had differed from his in any of thoſe important articles; which now make the irreconcilable breach between the Proteſtant churches and the church of Rome; ſince he even required an entire uniformity both in the celebration of Eaſter, and the manner of adminiſtering the ſacrament of baptiſm. And he had reaſon to inſiſt upon the one as well as the other. Becauſe a difference in either might have been a ſource of diviſions in our infant-church, ſcandalizing the new converts, and, by conſequence, obſtructed the progreſs of the goſpel. But if he had found, that beſides their diſagreement in theſe two articles (which in the bottom were but points of diſcipline) they differed from the church of Rome, as Proteſtants now do, in matters of revealed faith and doctrine, I think it more probable, that he would have endeavoured to convert the Britons, than importuned them to join with him in preaching to the Saxons. For was it ever known in the Chriſtian world that a Catholic biſhop invited Proteſtant miniſters to preach to his flock? This would be very exttraordinary indeed. And yet the caſe would be exactly parallel, if it were true, that when St. Auguſtin invited the Britiſh biſhops to labour jointly with him in the converſion of the Saxons, their faith and religion was the ſame, as is now profeſſed by our modern Proteſtants.

G. However we are informed by holy Bede of St. Auguſtin's telling the Britiſh biſhops, that they acted in many particulars contrary to the cuſtoms of the church of Rome. And who can tell what thoſe many particulars were? Or whether ſome of them at leaſt were not the ſame as are now maintained againſt us by the Proteſtant churches?

P. Whatever they were, for holy Bede has not ſpecified them, I can ſay with an entire aſſurance, that they had no relation to the doctrinal points, which

which are now maintained againſt us by the Proteſtant churches. Becauſe St. Auguſtin declared, that if they would but comply with the three conditions he propoſed, he would tolerate all other differences. Now ſince he judged that they might lawfully be tolerated for the ſake of peace, it is manifeſt he did not look upon them as errors in faith: becauſe errors deſtructive of the faith once delivered to the ſaints, cannot be tolerated upon any pretence whatſoever.

As for example, if St. Auguſtin had found the Britiſh biſhops rejecting, as Proteſtants do, the Maſs, ridiculing the doctrine of purgatory, or running down as an idolatrous worſhip the honour, which he and his company paid to ſaints, their images, and reliques, would there have been any room for a toleration? Has the church of Rome ever communicatd with a nation, that openly condemned theſe things, or any one article of her faith? No, there is not an example of it. And therefore ſince Auguſtin (who brought from Rome, and preached to the Saxons all the papiſtical doctrines we now profeſs) was content to communicate with the Britons, and tolerate all their practices, though diſagreeing from the cuſtoms of his own church, provided they would but comply with the few things he demanded of them, he was moſt certainly convinced, that they agreed with him in all thoſe articles of religion, which have ſince been rejected by all the Proteſtant churches, and that the practices he intended to tolerate, regarded only ſuch points of diſcipline, as are indifferent in themſelves, and wherein moſt national churches, though of the ſame faith and communion, are wont to differ more or leſs from one another.

This I take to be a full proof, that the ancient Britons were no Proteſtants; and that the faith they had received from Rome under pope Eleutherius,

therius, was the ſame, as St. Auguſtin preached four hundred years after to the Saxons.

SECT. 9.

The ſame SUBJECT continued.

IT is however my misfortune here to have Mr. Collier once more my adverſary in the article of the pope's ſupremacy; which he pretends to have been diſowned by the Britons. But I muſt here diſtinguiſh between Mr. Collier as an hiſtorian, and as a diſputant. As he is a diſputant, I will endeavour to give ſatisfactory anſwers to his arguments. But as he is an hiſtorian, I think he has not acted with the ſincerity he ought in relating the articles inſiſted on by St. Auguſtin, otherwiſe than they are ſet down in Bede. For he tells his reader, p. 76. that the articles inſiſted on were, that they [the Britiſh biſhops] ſhould keep Eaſter, and adminiſter baptiſm according to the uſages of the Roman church, and own the pope's authority.

Now there is not a word of this laſt article in Bede. For the third according to this author was, that the Britiſh biſhops ſhould join with St. Auguſtin in preaching to the Saxons. and the pope is not ſo much as mentioned in any of the three articles. Neither do I find that Geoffrey of Monmouth, an ancient hiſtorian, in his relation of the conference between St. Auguſtin and the Britiſh biſhops, makes any mention of their diſowning the pope's ſupremacy. He ſpeaks indeed of Dinooth the abbot of Bangor as a prolocutor of the aſſembly on the Britiſh ſide; and tells us, that the anſwer he gave to St. Auguſtin's propoſals was, That the Britons owed no ſubjection to him, as having an archbiſhop of their own: nor would they give themſelves the trouble to preach to their enemies.

That

That the Saxons had taken their country from them, for which they hated them extremely, and cared not what religion they were of: nor would they communicate with them any more than with dogs. L. 11. C. 7.

This was the ſubſtance of Dinooth's anſwer according to Geoffrey of Monmouth; in which there is not the leaſt inſinuation, that St. Auguſtin had inſiſted on their owning the pope's ſupremacy: but the moſt that can be gathered from it is, that in the conference he had made ſome mention of his being their archbiſhop and ſuperior. And even that is not a neceſſary conſequence. Becauſe the hot Dinooth ſpeaking from the abundance of his galled heart, might ſally forth into that warm expreſſion of owing no ſubjection to St. Auguſtin, on purpoſe to affront him, though he had not claimed any juriſdiction over them in quality of their archbiſhop, in expreſs terms. Becauſe we may eaſily ſuppoſe they had been informed of it, before their ſecond meeting.

G. But what drift had Mr. Collier in inſerting that article concerning the pope; ſince there is no mention of it in Bede, who is the moſt ancient recorder of that celebrated conference?

P. It cannot be queſtioned, but he intended it as an innuendo, that the Britiſh biſhops did not own any ſubjection to the ſee of Rome. It is true, he has produced a Welſh manuſcript to make this ſuſpected article paſs for current. But it appears ſomewhat ſingular, that after having followed Bede's hiſtory ſtep by ſtep in every thing relating to St. Auguſtin, he ſhould on a ſudden give his venerable guide the ſlip in ſo critical a paſſage, to take up with a manuſcript, which has neither date nor name ſet to it to recommend it, as he obſerves himſelf, and is of a doubtful authority, as appears from the arguments he has

has alledged for and againſt it. For the teſtimony of Bede is ſurely of greater weight, than any anonymous manuſcript, which may be a ſpurious piece for aught we know.

G. But, Sir, I remember that St. Auguſtin had no ſooner propoſed to the Britiſh biſhops the three conditions he required of them, but they anſwered him peremptorily, that they would do none of thoſe things, nor receive him as their archbiſhop. And the ſame is confirmed by Geoffrey of Monmouth, as you told me this very moment. Now this ſeems to imply their diſowning the pope's authority, who had conſtituted St. Auguſtin their archbiſhop, and given him juriſdiction over them.

P. This is the ground of Mr. Collier's argument, when he turns diſputant upon the point. And leſt it ſhould loſe any grains of it's weight, I ſhall deliver it to you in his own words.

" But farther, (ſays he) the certainty of the " Britiſh church's rejecting the pope's authority, " and Auguſtin the monk's juriſdiction does not " depend on the credit of this Welſh manuſcript. " For this point is ſufficiently cleared from Bede's " own words; where the Britiſh clergy declare " againſt Auguſtin for their archbiſhop. Whereas " had they owned the pope's authority, they " ought to have ſubmitted to Auguſtin, who act- " ed by the pope's commiſſion, and had his orders " to be their ſuperior. Now it was not poſſible " for them at ſuch a diſtance from Rome, to ex- " preſs their diſowning the papal authority more " effectually than by rejecting him, whom his " holineſs had ſent to be archbiſhop over them. " P. 76."

Thus Mr. Collier. But his argument will not hold good. For though it be true indeed that the Britons refuſed to receive St. Auguſtin for their archbiſhop,

archbiſhop, it does not follow from it, that therefore they diſowned the pope's ſupremacy, which I preſume is the point Mr. Collier drives at. For otherwiſe he ſays nothing to the purpoſe.

G. Sir, Mr. Collier ſays, that had the Britiſh biſhops owned the pope's authority, they ought to have ſubmitted to Auguſtin, who acted by the pope's commiſſion, and had his orders to be their ſuperior. And I confeſs he ſeems to me to have ſome reaſon on his ſide.

P. Sir, if they had owned that the pope's authority extended to the placing one as an ordinary ſuperior over their own archbiſhop, they ought in conſequence to have ſubmitted to St. Auguſtin. But there was no incoherence in their acknowledging pope Gregory ſupreme head of the univerſal church, and their refuſing to pay obedience to a perſon ſent by him in quality of an ordinary ſuperior over themſelves and their archbiſhop. Becauſe they might think that the pope had carried his pretenſions too high in degrading, as it were, their own archbiſhop, and ſubjecting both him and them to a foreign juriſdiction. And I really believe, that, though there be not a Catholic nation upon earth, but what acknowledges the divine right of the pope's ſupremacy, yet if he ſhould take upon him to ſend over a foreign archbiſhop with a commiſſion to exerciſe an ordinary juriſdiction over the biſhop of Prague, Toledo, or Paris, for example, he would be as vigorouſly oppoſed now, as St. Auguſtin was by the Britiſh clergy, and in all likelihood be ſent back with the ſame anſwer as that prelate was, to wit, That they would not receive him as their archbiſhop.

But would any man interpret this as a diſowning of the pope's ſupremacy? No ſurely; for all that could be legally inferred from it, would be, that it was their judgment, that the pope had exceeded

ceeded the juſt limits of his authority: there being a large difference between diſowning a perſon's juſt authority, and declaring againſt the real or ſuppoſed exceſſes committed by him in the exerciſe of it. And therefore Mr. Collier argues but weakly in adding, that it was impoſſible for the Britiſh clergy to expreſs their diſowning the papal authority more effectually than by rejecting him, whom his holineſs had ſent to be archbiſhop over them. For they might have expreſſed it much more effectually by telling St. Auguſtin, that the pope, who had ſent him, had no authority at all to exerciſe any juriſdiction over their church, much leſs to intrude a foreign archbiſhop upon them. This would have been an obvious and natural anſwer, had they diſowned the pope's ſupremacy. But they did not ſo much as mention him in their anſwer: and their refuſing to receive St. Auguſtin for their archbiſhop implied no more, than that they were convinced in their judgment, that the pope had exceeded the juſt bounds of his authority, in placing him over them, and reſolved to maintain the liberties and privileges, which their church had poſſeſſed by a long preſcription.

I only add, that there are innumerable inſtances in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of particular churches maintaining their priviledges againſt the ſee of Rome; and that, without derogating any more from the divine right of the pope's ſupremacy than a ſubject is ſuppoſed to derogate from the juſt prerogative of the crown, when he goes to law with his ſovereign; or a ſon to diſown the authority, his father has by nature over him, when he refuſes to obey a command, that appears unreaſonable to him.

G. But who then was in the wrong? St. Gregory or the Britiſh biſhops?

P. Perhaps

P. Perhaps neither the one nor the other; as it often happens in diſputes about privileges, and law-ſuits, wherein both parties for the moſt part think they have reaſon on their ſide. As to St. Gregory, Mr. Collier himſelf has made his apology in very ſtrong and pathetic terms, p. 79. where he concludes his honourable character of that pope in the following manner.

To conclude, ſays he, if the reſt of his ſucceſſors had kept cloſe to his doctrine, governed themſelves by his plan, and moved within the compaſs of his pretenſions, it is probable the church might have continued in it's primitive good correſpondence, and the diviſions of Chriſtendom might have been prevented. It appears then to Mr. Collier's judgment, that St. Gregory did not carry his pretenſions to any exceſs, when he conſtituted St. Auguſtin ſuperior over the Britiſh biſhops. And as to the doctrine taught by that ſaint, I appeal to Mr. Collier's own conſcience, whether Roman Catholics or Proteſtants keep cloſer to it.

However, to ſay ſomething in juſtification of St. Gregory's proceedings in reference to the Britiſh biſhops, it may be alledged, that the Britiſh clergy were at that time, as Gildas laments, fallen into very great and ſcandalous irregularities, which their biſhops either connived at, or neglected to correct. Now St. Gregory, who had the paſtoral care of all churches incumbent on him, might eaſily think he did not act beyond the juſt limits of the authority God had beſtowed upon him, in employing proper means to reclaim that ancient part of his flock, which was thus gone aſtray: And the placing a ſuperior of unſpotted character over them, with full powers to reform the abuſes, he ſhould find amongſt them, was the expedient he judged proper for that charitable deſign, though the

the oppoſition it met with from the Britiſh biſhops rendered it ineffectual.

But as to what regards thoſe prelates, whether they had or had not reaſon on their ſide, in refuſing to receive St. Auguſtin as their archbiſhop, (for I will not preſume to decide the matter) they were moſt certainly to blame in not complying with the three articles he inſiſted on; which were both reaſonable in themſelves, and might have been accepted of without any prejudice to the diſputed privileges of their church. Nay I cannot tell how to excuſe them from the guilt of ſchiſm in continuing obſtinately in their particular way of keeping Eaſter, even after it had been ſolemnly decreed againſt by the great council of Nice. And what aggravated their ſingularity in this practice was, that their pretended tradition for it could not be traced any higher on this ſide of the Britiſh ſeas, than the abbot Columba. As may be ſeen in Bede, L. 2. c. 19, and L. 3. c. 25. And this Columba was born and died in the very age that St. Auguſtine converted the kingdom of Kent. But let that be as it will, it is manifeſt that their refuſing to acknowledge St. Auguſtin for their archbiſhop is no proof of their diſowning the pope's ſupremacy. And ſo the arguments I have made choice of to eſtabliſh the principal point before us, to wit, that the Britons had received the ſame faith, which St. Auguſtin preached to the Saxons, continue in their full force.

However, I prove it 3dly, thus. If the Britons had been perſuaded, that they and St. Auguſtin differed in their ſyſtem of faith and religion, as Proteſtants and Roman Catholics do now; it is but rational to think, that when he importuned them to join with him in preaching to the Saxons, they would have told him in plain terms, that it was in vain to make any ſuch propoſal to them; becauſe

becauſe they being in many weighty points of a different perſuaſion from him and his company, could not poſſibly reſolve to preach doctrines contrary to their own judgment, and to what they had received from their forefathers. That for their parts the Maſs was to them an abomination; that the popes had uſurped a ſupremacy, which belonged not to them by divine right; that his praying to the ſaints, and honouring their images and reliques was downright idolatry, and his purgatory a mere fable; and that therefore they could not in conſcience communicate with him, nor regard him otherwiſe than as a heretic, and promoter of falſe doctrines. This, I ſay, would have been a much more rational and obvious anſwer, if eſpecially they had been Proteſtants in the articles I have mentioned (as John Fox pretends) than the frivilous and unchriſtian reaſon alledged by them according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, to wit, that they would not preach the goſpel to their enemies, who had driven them out of their country.

I prove it 4thly, becauſe there is not an example of a Proteſtant ſaint in the Roman calendar; or that the church of Rome ever canonized a perſon, that differed from her in any one article of faith defined by her as ſuch. Now ſhe acknowledges a great number of thoſe for ſaints, who preached in Britain, or governed the Britiſh church long before the coming of St. Auguſtin. As St. Faſtidius archbiſhop of London in the beginning of the fifth century. St. Ninian, who was of the blood royal, ſtudied his divinity at Rome, converted the Picts, and died An. 432. St. Palladius, who was ſent into Britain by pope Celeſtin in the very year that St. Ninian died. And laſtly (to omit many others for brevity ſake) St. Dubritius archbiſhop of of Caerleon, and his ſucceſſor

ceſſor St. David. The former of which, ſays Geoffrey of Monmouth, being primate of Britain, and legate of the ſee apoſtolic, was ſo famous for his religious holineſs, that he cured many by the force of his prayers. Hiſt. Brit. L. 9. C. 12. he died An. 522. And of St. David (who tranſlated the archiepiſcopal ſee to the town called to this day by his name, and lived to a very great age) John Bale writes, that he was put into the catalogue of papiſtical gods by pope Calixtus the ſecond.

Theſe eminent perſons therefore, and many more of the ancient Britiſh church were all papiſtical ſaints, and have always been acknowledged for ſuch by the church of Rome; which never put any Proteſtant, or any man of a different faith from her own into the catalogue of papiſtical gods, as wicked John Bale is pleaſed to call them. And this I take to be an unanſwerable proof that the ancient Britons (excepting thoſe, who were for a time infected with the Pelagian hereſy) agreed in all doctrinal points with the ſee of Rome; for otherwiſe we ſhould not have heard of ſo many calendar ſaints among them. And it is remarkable, that there is not the leaſt mention in Bede, that when St. German and St. Lupus came into Britain, (which was about the year 440) to purge it from the Pelagian hereſy, they found any other errors in faith that wanted a reformation. Hence it follows, that they found the faith of the Britons conformable to their own in all other reſpects. And we may eaſily know, what religion theſe two apoſtolical men were of from a few inſtances related by the aboveſaid venerable hiſtorian.

For, (beſides that they are honoured as ſaints, and have their feſtival days allotted them by the church of Rome; which is a demonſtration that they were not Proteſtants, either in doctrine or practice)

practice,) holy Bede tells us, that a blind girl being preſented to St. German by her parents, he made a ſhort prayer, and being full of the Holy Ghoſt invoked the Trinity, and taking into his hands a box of reliques, which hung about his neck, he applyed it to the girl's eyes, which were immediately delivered from darkneſs, and filled with the light of truth, L. 1. C. 18. After this the two holy biſhops went to the tomb of St. Alban, to pay their devotions to that holy martyr. Where, after having prayed a conſiderable time, St. German commanded the tomb to be opened, and depoſited therein ſome of the reliques of the apoſtles and other martyrs, which he had brought with him out of France, and in exchange thereof carried away ſome of the earth, which had been ſprinkled with the martyr's blood. Ibid.

How rank does every part of this relation favour of modern Popery? For I am very ſure no biſhop of Proteſtant principles would have carried a box of reliques about his neck; nor have had faith enough to believe, that the touch of them would reſtore ſight to the blind. Nor would he have made a pilgrimage to St. Alban's tomb; much leſs carried away with him, as a valuable treaſure, a part of the earth, on which the martyr's blood had been ſhed. It is plain then that this eminent prelate was a ſtaunch Roman Catholic. And ſince at that time (which was above 150 years before St. Auguſtin's coming) he found no errors to be reformed in the Britiſh church, but thoſe of the Pelagian hereſy, we may reaſonably conclude their faith was the ſame as his, and even their practice in the keeping of Eaſter. For otherwiſe he would moſt certainly have taken notice of its ſingularity, and reformed it according to the decree of the council of Nice, and the practice of the univerſal church.

And ſo the religion eſtabliſhed amongſt them was the very ſame Popery which St. German profeſſed, and St. Auguſtin preached above 150 years after to the Saxons.

To conclude, I argue thus from the premiſes I have eſtabliſhed. The Engliſh Roman Catholics profeſs the ſame faith now, as was preached by St. Auguſtin above eleven hundred years ago. But the faith taught by St. Auguſtin was in all points, wherein Proteſtants and Catholics differ, the very ſame that St. Fugatius and Damianus had preached to the Britons four hundred years before; therefore in all conteſted points the Engliſh Roman Catholics profeſs the ſame faith now, as was preached by thoſe two holy biſhops in the very ſecond age of Chriſtianity. That is, in one of thoſe two primitive ages, in which according to the common way of ſpeaking among Proteſtants the goſpel was preached in its full purity. If this argument be not concluſive, I deſire to know where the defect of it lies. But if it be concluſive, as I conceive it is, the Proteſtant churches are in a defenceleſs condition; as being convicted of teaching in every article, wherein they differ from the church of Rome, a doctrine directly contrary to that of the primitive church.

SECT. 10.

Some Obſervations upon the CONVERSION of ENGLAND under Pope GREGORY.

G. SIR, I have kept pace with you from argument to argument, with the beſt of my attention, and laid them up as well as I could in my memory. But I am ſtill at a loſs to know what connection the hiſtorical circumſtances of England's converſion have with the external marks of

of the true church, by which ſhe is diſtinguiſhed from all others.

P. Sir, you will ſee it in due time. But I muſt beg leave to premiſe ſome obſervations upon the ſhort hiſtory I have entertained you with. For theſe will ſerve as lights to direct you to the point you are in ſearch of.

Firſt, then, I obſerve that the perſons employed in the converſion of this iſland had their commiſſion given them by the undoubted ſucceſſor of St. Peter, and St. Peter had his immediately from Chriſt. So that the legality of their miſſion and miniſtry was as unqueſtionable, as the commiſſion of a civil or military officer, which he receives from the hand of the prime miniſter veſted with that power by the ſupreme magiſtrate. This is ſo eſſential an article, that they, who cannot derive their eccleſiaſtical miſſion and miniſtry originally from Chriſt himſelf and his bleſſed apoſtles, by a continued ſucceſſion of biſhops deſcending from them in the ſame communion, are ſtigmatized by our bleſſed Saviour with the infamous character of *thieves and robbers, who enter not by the door, but climb up another way.* Joh. 10. v. 1.

2dly, St. Auguſtin and his companions brought into England the religion of the place from whence they came, and of the holy biſhop, by whom they were ſent: And the profeſſion of this religion alone was ſupported by public authority in all parts of this kingdom for the ſpace of little leſs than 900 years, counting from the converſion of the whole heptarchy. Whence it follows, that if pope Gregory was orthodox in his faith, St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners were ſo too: and if St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners were orthodox in their faith, the Saxons converted by them were ſo likewiſe. And hence it follows, again, that they, who continued for 900 years in

the profeſſion of that very faith and religion, to which the Saxons were converted, it follows, I ſay, that they have the ſame aſſurance of the truth and purity of their faith as St. Gregory himſelf had; and all Roman Catholics, who to this day profeſs no other religion than that of their anceſtors, have the ſame ſecurity for the truth of their's.

Now I may ſafely ſay, he muſt be a bold man, who dare accuſe of errors in faith ſo great a man, both for his eminent learning and holineſs of life, as St. Gregory has always been eſteemed; and whom the unanimous conſent of antiquity has ever regarded as one of the moſt illuſtrious ſaints and pillars of God's church: In ſo much that the Greeks as well as Latins ſolemnize his annual feaſt, and never mention him in their writings but with the profoundeſt reſpect, and veneration for his memory. So that whoever makes a difficulty in matters of faith and religion to venture his ſoul (as all Roman Catholics do) upon the ſame bottom with St. Gregory, has I fear ſome intereſt in view much dearer to him, than that of arriving ſafe in in the harbour of eternal ſalvation.

Pray tell me, Sir, ſuppoſe you were to die this moment, in whoſe company would you now choſe to venture your ſoul? With St. Gregory, who tranſplanted to this iſland the faith, of which he was himſelf convinced, or in the company of thoſe reforming gentlemen, who fell from that faith, and ſet up a new ſyſtem of religion upon the ruins of it?

G. I think indeed the choice will not admit of much deliberation. For, if true faith be neceſſary to ſalvation, as you have proved it to be, I really believe the company of thoſe gentlemen, who apoſtatized from the faith taught by St. Gregory

gory and his faithful diſciple St. Auguſtin is not much to be coveted in the other world.

P. 3dly, England being converted was at the ſame time incorporated with the great body of the Catholic or univerſal church. That is to ſay, it became nôt a ſeperate communion ſtanding by itſelf like the upſtart churches of the Lutherans and Calviniſts, who by their pretended reformation divided themſelves from all the pre-exiſting Chriſtian churches in the world, but it entered on contrary into the common ſheepfold, and united itſelf by faith and communion to the whole viſible body of the Catholic church upon earth. So that it's faith, though newly communicated to it, was not new in itſelf, but perfectly Catholic and apoſtolic. Catholic both in regard of time and place, and apoſtolic, by having been received from the undoubted ſucceſſors of the apoſtles.

4thly, Though the ſeveral petty kingdoms of the Saxons, as likewiſe the kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland, were converted by different miſſioners, and at different times, they all received the ſame faith in every point, wherein there is any diſagreement between the Proteſtant churches and the church of Rome. I ſhall ſhew hereafter the force and conſequences of this obſervation, wherein that unity of faith, which is an eſſential attribute of the true church of Chriſt, is concerned.

5thly, The truth of St. Auguſtin's doctrine was atteſted by undoubted miracles. In reference to which I muſt obſerve, that ſince the belief of revealed truths is a rational act, though the truths themſelves ſurpaſs all human underſtanding, therefore the providence of God has taken care to furniſh men with ſuch ſolid and rational motives to ground their belief of ſupernatural truths upon, that they who refuſe to yield to ſuch motives act contrary to the dictates of reaſon and common

ſenſe. Now one of theſe, and I may ſay the ſtrongeſt of them, is the teſtimony of undoubted miracles: becauſe they are the teſtimony of God, by whoſe inviſible hand they are wrought, and God, who is eſſentially truth, cannot bear witneſs to any falſhood.

For this reaſon the Son of God himſelf not only condeſcended to prove the truth of his doctrine by miracles, but declared mereover, that *if he had not done the works which no man ever did, they* [the Jews] *would have had no ſin.* Joh. 15. v. 24. And why ſo? Becauſe God will have men act like men, that is, rationally. And thoſe among the Jews, who believed effectually in him, would not have acted rationally, if they had believed the incomprehenſible truths he taught, upon his bare word; that is, without any motive to recommend to them the divine authority of it.

For the ſame reaſon Chriſt impowered his apoſtles to work as great miracles as himſelf had done, according to his promiſe, John 14. v. 12. For theſe were to be their credentials, upon ſight whereof both Jews and heathens might form a rational judgment that the new and incomprehenſible doctrines they taught, were not the inventions of any man, but truths revealed by God, who vouchſafed to ſet his divine hand and ſeal to them by thoſe ſupernatural operations. Whence it follows, that the teſtimony of miracles, when they are above all ſuſpicion of fraud, and cannot be queſtioned but by the blackeſt malice, carry with them ſuch a powerful evidence, as cannot be rejected but by a people given up by God to a reprobate ſenſe.

This then is the force of my 5th obſervation, to wit, that the religion planted in England by St. Auguſtin and his followers had the ſame infallible mark of truth ſtamped upon it, as Chriſtianity

anity had at it's firſt entrance into the world. Becauſe the miracles, by which A. G. was pleaſed to become a voucher for the truth of it, though they have not the divine authority of ſcriptural miracles, yet are as authenticly atteſted as any hiſtorical facts can poſſibly be. And he who will not believe them muſt throw aſide all eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, but what the ſacred penmen have written.

6thly, The converſion of England to the Catholic faith, was entirely free and voluntary. No violence was uſed, no threats of priſons, baniſhments, or confiſcations were employed, no penal laws enacted to frighten the people into a compliance; but every thing was carried on by the power of preaching, miracles, and good example. By theſe methods England received it's firſt Chriſtianity: Whereas it is the diſtinguiſhing character of falſhood to eſtabliſh itſelf by violence and impoſture.

7thly, The religion preached by St. Auguſtin and his followers, had no ſooner got footing among the Saxons, but there appeared a wonderful change in their lives and manners, which always is the immediate fruit of a true and ſolid converſion. And there is not perhaps a nation upon earth, where religious piety and devotion flouriſhed in a more remarkable manner for many years after its converſion, than in the iſland of Great Britain.

Mr. Collier has confirmed, or rather foreſtalled, my three laſt obſervations, in the preface to his eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, p. 3. where he writes thus:

"To inſiſt a little upon the laſt circumſtance, [relating to God's providence] "we have a re-
"markable inſtance of it in our own nation. For
"the purpoſe, when Auguſtin, the monk, un-
"dertook the converſion of the Saxons, was any
"thing, humanly ſpeaking, more unlikely to ſuc-

" ceed? He had neither fleet nor army to back
" his enterprize, and none but a few naked men
" to attend him. He had no worldly motives to
" recommend him to king Ethelbert. He had no
" powerful alliances to offer, no new countries
" (like Columbus) to diſcover. We do not find him
" furniſhed with any rich preſents, with any in-
" ventions for the poliſhing of life, with any
" curioſities of art or nature to make way for his
" deſign. On the other ſide, the propoſals of
" theſe holy men muſt needs be ſhocking to a
" pagan court. Their doctrine laid new reſtraints
" upon pride and pleaſure, and was unfriendly
" to the intereſt of fleſh and blood. And as
" for the happineſs they promiſed, it was moſtly
" out of ſight, and not to commence till after
" death.

" Notwithſtanding theſe ſeeming impoſſibili-
" ties, they were bleſſed with ſurpriſing ſucceſs:
" The ſanctity of their lives, and the force of
" their miracles broke through the difficulty of
" the enterprize. The Saxons were quickly pre-
" vailed on to part with their old idolatry, and
" reſign their manners and belief. The practice
" of their converts was wonderfully changed, and
" a glorious revolution made in the moral world.
" They had now no delight in barbarity and
" bloodſhed. The ruggedneſs of their temper
" was ſmoothed, and they grew much more juſt
" and benevolent than formerly. Their purſuits
" were of a different kind, their affections regu-
" lar and raiſed, and every thing brightened
" within; as if nature had been melted down
" and recoined. In ſhort, the *quatuor noviſſima*,
" Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell, took
" ſuch hold of their hopes and fears, that they
" ſometimes ſtood off from the more innocent ſa-
" tisfactions of life, threw up the advantage of

" their

" their condition, and removed from company " and buſineſs. The other world ſat ſo power- " fully upon their ſpirits, that the entertain- " ments of this grew flat and inſipid. It was upon " theſe thoughts that ſeveral of our princes re- " ſigned the government for the cloyſter. And " thoſe who did not conceive themſelves obliged " to ſuch lengths of ſelf-denial, laid out part of " their revenues in the building and endowing of " churches, in founding houſes for learning and " education, and for the benefit of retirement " and devotion."

Thus Mr. Collier. And he has but done juſtice to the great merits of our apoſtle on the one hand, and to the pious zeal and devotion of our primitive Engliſh church on the other.

8thly, When England received the faith of Chriſt, all national Chriſtian churches both in the eaſt and weſt were united in communion with the apoſtolic ſee. For the rupture of the Greeks did not happen till 250 years after. Either therefore the church, whereof England became a part by it's converſion, was then the true church, or Chriſt had not then a true church upon earth. If Proteſtants grant the firſt, they muſt own that they ceaſed to be a part of the true church, when they ſeparated themſelves from the church of Rome. If they chooſe the latter, it follows that the creed was then falſe, and continued ſo for many ages; and then the Proteſtants of the church of England are bound to renounce their 8th article of religion, which declares, that the three creeds, Nice creed, Athanaſius's creed, and that which is commonly called the apoſtles creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by moſt certain warrants of holy ſcripture.

9thly and laſtly, I obſerve that the whole work of England's converſion was carried on with the

utmoſt regularity and order. The workmen employed in it were qualified according to God's own appointment. That is, were all of the epiſcopal and prieſtly order. Their proceedings were according to the eſtabliſhed laws and canons of the church. They acted as miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, with a due ſubordination to their reſpective ſpiritual ſuperiors, not as ſlaves to the arbitrary will of the ſecular magiſtrate. No laick of what rank ſoever invaded the ſanctuary, or preſumed to put his prophane hands to the cenſer. Nothing of this nature was attempted in thoſe early days of our Engliſh church, nor any other force made uſe of, but the prevailing force of truth preached by men, that lived up to their ſacred character, were filled with the ſpirit of God, and acted in their proper ſphere.

In a word, what rendered them like the primitive apoſtles, powerful both in words and works, was their truly apoſtolical method of life. They had renounced the world with its riches and pleaſures, to ſerve God in a ſtate of perpetual poverty and penance; and were therefore above the temptations of flattery and avarice, which always have ſome baſe lucre in view. They had neither wives nor children to maintain, and ſo were not ſolicitous to gain wealth, but only to gain ſouls to God. Their time was ſpent in prayer and retirement, as far as their apoſtolical function would permit; and as they walked themſelves in the narrow way of the goſpel, ſo they preached it boldly to others, in imitation of St. Paul, without flattering their inclinations in any thing contrary to the law of God.

It was thus that Catholic religion, now nicknamed Popery, was planted in this iſland by the ſame regular and canonical methods, as had been practiſed by the bleſſed apoſtles themſelves, in the very

very infancy of the church: that is to ſay, not by rapine, violence, and bloodſhed, but by the power of preaching only. Nor by the intruſion of lay perſons into the ſanctuary, but by the miniſtry of biſhops and prieſts, eminent for holineſs of life, deſpiſers of the world; dead to the uſual inclinations of fleſh and blood, and entirely free from the paſſions of covetouſneſs and ambition, which are the great corrupters of mens' hearts, and make them turn ſeducers either for the ſake of lucre, or to domineer and tyrannize over mens' faith.

Now does not the hand of God appear manifeſtly in the whole management of this work, but particularly in relation to the choice of the perſons employed in it? May we not truly ſay they were according to God's heart? For what ſurer marks can we have of the divine election of perſons to the miniſtry of the goſpel, than when we ſee them irreproachable in their conduct, diſintereſted in their views, free from all affections to earthly things, and qualified in all reſpects for their ſacred functions? Is this the proper character of mercenaries, or of good ſhepherds? of intruders into the ſheepfold, or of guides of God's own appointment? Of ſeducers, or of preachers of ſound doctrines?

G. Truly, Sir, if perſons of this character did not preach the true faith to our anceſtors the Saxons, we cannot be ſure, that the true faith of Chriſt has ever been preached to any nation upon earth ſince the death of the apoſtles.

P. That is very certain; and I may confidently ſay, that the whole collection of circumſtances, upon which I have now made my obſervations, both as to the means made uſe of in this ſecond converſion of England, and to the character of the perſons employed in it, amounts to ſuch a ſtrong

ſtrong proof of the orthodoxy of the faith and religion preached to our anceſtors the Saxons, and profeſſed to this day by all Roman Catholics, that a thinking man cannot regard it otherwiſe than as a deciſive mark plainly ſhewing in what communion the true church of Chriſt is to be found.

But ſince oppoſites, as beauty and deformity, appear in their beſt and ſtrongeſt light, when they are placed near to one another, I muſt deſire you now to turn your attention from the agreeable proſpect we have had before us of regularity and order, religious piety and diſintereſted zeal, to a ſcene of confuſion, rapine, bloodſhed, deſolation, and every thing that is apt to ſtrike the heart with horror. You will there ſee the laws of God and man trampled upon, religion made a cloak to cover the blackeſt crimes, ſacred places violated, altars prophaned, the veſſels conſecrated to God's ſervice abuſed, as in the drunken feaſt of Balthazzer, the ancient monuments of piety deſtroyed, the eccleſiaſtical authority invaded by laicks, monaſteries plundered and laid level with the ground, the patrimony of the church made a prey to the inſatiable rapacity of court-harpies, the people forced againſt their conſcience to a conformity by the moſt unjuſt and ſanguinary laws, and perſons of all ſtates and degrees dragged to execution like common felons for non-compliance with commands directly contrary to the law of God.

This, Sir, is a faithful picture in miniature of thoſe ſtupendous changes in religion, which our modern Proteſtants varniſh over with the name of a thorough godly reformation. But I leave any man to judge, whether the Holy Ghoſt could have any part in ſuch counſels; or whether it be conſiſtent with the infinite juſtice or purity of God to adopt as his workmanſhip a reformation, which forced

forced its way into the world by the open violation of his holy law, was carried on by ſacrilege and plunder, cemented with innocent blood, and finally eſtabliſhed in direct oppoſition to all the guides of God's own appointment.

G. No man will ſurely be ſo extravagant as to ſay, that God could approve of ſuch deteſtable proceedings: Or that a church, which owes it's beginning, progreſs, and final eſtabliſhment to ſuch wicked means, can be the true church of Chriſt. I have therefore ſome difficulty to believe, that Proteſtants will own the truth of theſe facts; which, if allowed to be true, utterly diſcredit their religion, and ſhew the reformation they ſo much boaſt of, to be the fruit not of piety, or zeal for God's honour, but of the moſt criminal paſſions, corrupt nature is capable of.

P. Have but patience till we meet next, and you ſhall hear every fact proved from the teſtimony of unexceptionable Proteſtant writers. But it is now full time for us both to reſt a while; and the ſubject, which remains to be examined, will afford matter enough for another meeting. So I take my leave of you till to-morrow.

G. Sir, I am your humble ſervant; and thank you for the pains you have already taken.

The End of the ſecond Dialogue.

THE

THE THIRD DIALOGUE,

CONTAINING

AN HISTORICAL COLLECTION OF FACTS

RELATING TO THE

ENGLISH REFORMATION,

IN THE REIGNS OF

HENRY VIII.—EDWARD VI.—AND QUEEN ELIZABETH.

SECT. I.

HENRY VIII. falls in Love with ANNE BOLEN. The MOTIVES of his DIVORCE from Queen CATHARINE examined.

G. SIR, the general account you gave me, before we parted laſt, of the Engliſh reformation, throws ſuch an infamy upon the chief actors in it, and favours ſo much of a paſſionate invective, prompted by a prejudiced mind, that unleſs you can produce undeniable hiſtorical facts to ſupport the truth of it, neither Proteſtant nor Catholic will believe you, and you will only prejudice your own cauſe by it.

P. I aſſure you, Sir, it has always been my judgment, that nothing is either more unbecoming the character of a Chriſtian, or gives a deeper wound to the credit and reputation of any cauſe, than to charge perſons, either alive or dead, with odious facts, which cannot be fully and clearly proved againſt them. But then I take it to

be

be an unconteſted principle, that in diſputes between two parties an adverſary's own teſtimony is always good and legal evidence againſt himſelf; eſpecially if he be of an unexceptionable character as to the ſincerity of his affection to the cauſe he maintains; becauſe it is to be ſuppoſed that an hiſtorian of this character will not relate facts, which reflect upon the honour of his own cauſe, unleſs the force of truth extorts it from him. And therefore it ſhall be my ſpecial care not to draw any conſequences from, or build upon any fact that is diſhonourable to the Proteſtant cauſe, without producing ſome Proteſtant hiſtorian, who is known to be ſincerely affected to that cauſe, and a hearty enemy to Popery, to vouch for the truth of it.

G. Nothing can be fairer than this. For unleſs it be an over-ruled caſe, that a writer is not *compos mentis*, when he cuts the throat of his own cauſe by telling truth, it is but juſt at any time to believe a man againſt himſelf. So pray, Sir, proceed to your hiſtorical account of the Engliſh reformation.

P. The firſt occaſion of the changes of religion in England (called the reformation) took it's ſource from a diſorderly paſſion entertained by Henry VIII. for a court-lady named Anne Bolen. He had lived in wedlock with his virtuous queen Catharine the daughter of Ferdinand of Arragon, and aunt of Charles V. for the ſpace of about 20 years, without any ſcruple of conſcience concerning the validity of their marriage. Our king (ſays the lord Herbert, p. 243.) had now for many years enjoyed the virtuous queen Catharine, without that either ſcruple of the validity of the match, or outward note of unkindneſs had paſſed between them. But when ſhe grew old, and was paſt bearing children, he began to be diſturbed with moſt grievous

ſcruples

ſcruples about it; nor could his tender conſcience enjoy any repoſe, till his ſuperannuated wife was removed from his bed, and the place made clear for his young intended bride to take poſſeſſion of it.

Dr. Heylin, though a hearty enemy to the church of Rome, has been ſo ſincere as to let the world know, of what nature king Henry's ſcruples were.

"King Henry VIII. (ſays he) being violently "hurried with the tranſport of ſome private affec- "tions, and finding the pope appeared the greateſt "obſtacle to his deſires, extinguiſhed his autho- "rity in the realm of England. This opened the "firſt way to the reformation, and gave encour- "agement to thoſe, who were inclined to it; to "which the king afforded no ſmall encourage- "ment for politic ends. Pref. p. 2."

Here we have the true ſecret of king Henry's ſcruples (which gave birth to the reformation) laid open without diſguiſe; and the plain truth of the ſtory is this. He was growing weary of his wife, and had ſet his heart ſo violently upon Mrs. Anne Bolen, that he was reſolved to have her coſt what it would: He therefore left no ſtone unturned to compaſs his end. Agents were ſent abroad to tamper with ſeveral foreign univerſities; many members whereof were made to feel the juſtice of king Henry's cauſe in a very ſenſible manner, * and both promiſes and threats were employed at home to cajole ſome and frighten others into a compliance.

But his chief application was to pope Clement VII. to whom he had been very ſerviceable in ſome important occaſions, and therefore deſpaired not of gaining him over to his ſide; which indeed would have given no ſmall reputation to his cauſe, if

* See the Preface.

if it could have been effected. But though all ſorts of engines were ſet at work, and the moſt importune ſolicitations employed by the king's agents at Rome to render the pope pliable to his deſires; though they laid before him all that could be ſaid to repreſent the extreme violence of king Henry's temper, the pretended reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of a divorce, and the dangerous conſequences of a refuſal, their negotiations proved unſucceſsful: his holineſs being convinced in conſcience, that it was not in his power to diſſolve a marriage, which had been authorized, and ratified in the moſt ſolemn manner by his predeceſſor Julius II.

However he judged it neceſſary to proceed very warily in a buſineſs of that importance, and ſteer his courſe with the utmoſt caution in a middle way between two rocks; ſo as neither to diſoblige the emperor, who had an army in the very heart of Italy, or wrong his own conſcience on the one hand by too great a condeſcenſion, nor exaſperate the king by a peremptory refuſal on the other, for fear of puſhing him to the laſt extremities. He therefore made it his buſineſs to lay hold of all occaſions, or plauſible pretences of delays to gain time, as is the uſual method in courts, when they have an odious cauſe before them; hoping perhaps that length of time, or ſome favourable turn of affairs, might either make the king alter his mind, or at leaſt abate in ſome meaſure the violence of his paſſion. In all which there appears nothing of unchriſtian politics, as Proteſtant writers uſually repreſent the matter, unleſs acting prudently be contrary to Chriſtianity.

G. What you have told me, Sir, ſuffices indeed to convince me, or any rational man, that king Henry's ſcruples were all grimace, and nothing better

better than a mere theatrical farce; for I never heard him repreſented as a perſon much famed for tenderneſs of conſcience. However, were there not ſufficient grounds to give at leaſt a plauſible colour to his divorce from queen Catharine, who had before been married to prince Arthur his elder brother?

P. This was the ſpecious pretence laid hold of, by the mercenary ſycophants of the court, who plainly ſaw what the king would be at; and it afforded them an excellent opportunity to work out their own ends by humouring him agreeably in a paſſion he was fully reſolved to gratify. For this was at that time a ſure ſtep to favour and preferment.

G. But is it not forbidden to marry a ſiſter-in-law?

P. It is forbidden by the laws of the church, but not by the law of nature. On the contrary, God laid a poſitive command upon the Jews, that the younger brother ſhould marry the elder brother's wife, if he died without iſſue. Deut. 25. v. 5.

G. However I have ſometimes heard Proteſtants object, that a ſiſter-in-law being within the degrees of affinity prohibited by God himſelf in Leviticus, it could not be juſtifiable in king Henry to marry his brother's wife.

P. Sir, if all the prohibitions or commands of God, recorded in the books of Moſes, are to be regarded as laws that oblige Chriſtians, we are all bound to turn Jews, ſubmit to circumciſion, and obſerve the whole Moſaick law: which being abſurd and impious, nothing can be more frivolous, than to object the Levitical prohibited degrees, unleſs it can be proved, that the prohibition was not a mere ceremonial law, but like the decalogue, grounded upon the very law of nature. Now

if

if it were againſt the law of nature to marry a brother's wife after his deceaſe, God would not have commanded it, as he did in the aboveſaid caſe; becauſe the law of nature is the eternal and unalterable law of God himſelf, and he cannot command the violation of his own eternal and unalterable law.

Hence it follows, that the unlawfulneſs of marrying a brother's wife has ever ſince the abrogation of the Moſaick law, been wholly grounded upon a mere eccleſiaſtical precept, like the other prohibited degrees, which may be diſpenſed with by a lawful authority; becauſe the ſame authority that makes ſuch laws, may likewiſe diſpenſe with them for juſt reaſons. And this was the caſe in reference to king Henry's marriage, which had been diſpenſed with by Julius II. in the moſt ſolemn manner, and with the general approbation of the wiſeſt and moſt learned men of England, Italy, and Spain. So that it is apparent, that his pretended ſcruples about it, after having acknowledged queen Catharine for his lawful wife, and converſed with her as ſuch for the ſpace of 20 years, was all rank hypocriſy and diſſimulation, and nothing but a maſk to cover his intended adultery.

G. But let us ſuppoſe queen Catharine had never been his brother's wife, is it probable, he would have entertained any thoughts of procuring a divorce from her? If not, Proteſtants will ſay, you bear too hard upon him.

P. Sir, if actions may be allowed to be the moſt faithful interpreters of mens' hearts, I dare make bold to ſay, that though queen Catharine had never been married to prince Arthur, king Henry would have been that ſame king Henry, of whom it is written, that he never ſpared man in his anger, nor woman in his luſt: that is to ſay, he would have done

done juſt as he did, though he would not have had ſo good a cloak to cover the ſhame of it, but been obliged to find other pretexts for it. This is apparent from his behaviour afterwards (when no Levitical prohibited degrees could be pretended) towards his 4th wife the lady Ann of Cleves; to whom (as the lord Herbert tells us, p. 516) he was ſolemnly married at Greenwich. Yet not long after found means to caſt her off, and immediately took the lady Catharine Howard for his 5th wife. But to ſhew the arbitrary power he had, and to what miſerable ſervitude he had reduced both his parliament and clergy, let us hear the relation of it from Stow, p. 578.

"After the death of the lady Jane Seymour, "the king's third wife, he married the lady "Anne of Cleves in the 30th year of his reign. "From which time the king not only continued "his firſt miſliking of her [meaning at their firſt "interview at Rocheſter, whither the king "went to meet her] but his hatred encreaſed more "and more againſt her, not only for want of "beauty, whereof at firſt he took exception, but "alſo for ſundry other qualities, whereof he ſe-"cretly accuſed her. And being thus ſo ſorely "perplexed and deſperate of redreſs, he grew "wonderous apt and willing to call in queſtion, "any thing that might tend to the diſſolving "of this marriage. Within eight days, the king "told his phyſicians his farther cauſe of grief, "that ſhe was loathſome to him in bed——The "king, being thus tormented in body and mind, "knew not how to eaſe himſelf, until he had "procured a ſpeedy divorce, which was thus ef-"fected: Certain lords came down into the "lower houſe of parliament, expreſsly declaring "the cauſes why this marriage was not lawful: "And in concluſion the matter was, by the con-

vocation,

" vocation, clearly determined that the king might " lawfully marry where he would, and ſo might " ſhe."

This ſhews plainly, that conjugal fidelity, was none of king Henry's virtues; and that queen Catharine would in all probability have been made to drink of the ſame bitter cup, though ſhe had never been his brother's wife; ſince the motives here alledged to juſtify this divorce are of ſuch a large extent, that if allowed of, no conjugal knot was ever tied faſt enough to be ſecure againſt a diſſolution. It ſhews likewiſe that all the fences, whether of human or divine laws are too weak to withſtand the unbridled luſt of a prince, when he has a deſpotic and arbitrary power in his hands, as king Henry had, to make himſelf obeyed.

But I have now a curious piece of hiſtory to entertain you with; which will make good every thing I have ſaid concerning the king's pretended ſcruples, and ſerve as a key to let us into the whole ſecret of that myſtery of iniquity. I am indebted for it to my lord Herbert, and you ſhall have it in his own words.

" Our king (ſays he p. 252) thought fit to ſend " Sir Francis Bryan and Peter Vannes to Rome. " Their inſtructions in general being ſigned with " the king's own hand, were, &c."

Here the author gives an account of ſome inſtructions relating to the king's affairs with the emperor, and then proceeds thus:

" Furthermore, they were required to diſcover " in the name of a third perſon, whether if the " queen entered into a religious life, the king " might have the pope's diſpenſation to marry " again, and the children be legitimate; and what " precedents there were for it. Secondly, whe- " ther if the king for the better inducing the " queen

" queen thereunto would promiſe to enter him-
" ſelf into a religious life, the pope might not
" diſpenſe with his vow, and leave her there."

A moſt godly contrivance! the king was to make a vow to God, which he never intended to keep; and the poor queen was to be left in the lurch! if this be not a mark of tenderneſs of conſcience, I know not what is. But liſten to what follows:

" Thirdly, If this may not be done, whether
" the pope can diſpenſe with the king to have
" two wives, and the children of both legiti-
" mate; ſince great reaſons and precedents,
" eſpecially in the old Teſtament, appear for it.
" All which they were to do with that ſecrecy
" and circumſpection, that the cauſe might not
" be publiſhed; propounding therefore the king's
" caſe always as another man's. Laſtly, As in all
" other inſtructions, ſome menaces were to be
" added."

G. Here is fine juggling work indeed for a pretender to ſcruples.

P. I ſhall make a few ſhort remarks upon it. Firſt, I obſerve how ſtrangely induſtrious and fruitful of invention men are, when they ſeek to gratify a paſſion, which has once taken deep root in their hearts. I obſerve 2dly, that king Henry's ſeeking partly to trepan the pope by indirect and ſiniſter means, and partly to frighten him by threats into a compliance with his deſires, is a plain indication, that he was conſcious to himſelf of the badneſs of his cauſe. And I obſerve 3dly, that his ſhameful propoſal of being diſpenſed with to have two wives at once, ſhews no leſs plainly, that his conſcience would have permitted queen Catharine to continue his wife, notwithſtanding her having been married before to his elder bro-

ther,

ther, if Mrs. Anne Bolen had been but privileged to ſhare with her in that honour.

G. But was King Henry ſkilful enough in the art of diſſimulation to ſet a ſerious countenance upon the matter, when he pretended a ſcruple of conſcience about his firſt marriage.

P. No ſtage-player ever acted his part better. You ſhall have a ſpecimen of his ſkill from the ſame author, p. 258.

"This while (ſays he) the common people, "who with much anxiety attended the ſucceſs of "this great affair, ſeemed, between pity to queen "Catharine and envy to Anne Bolen, now ap- "pearing to be in the king's favour, to caſt out "ſome murmering and ſeditious words; which "being brought to the king's ears, he thought "fit to proteſt publicly, in an aſſembly of lords, "judges, &c. called to his palace at Bridewell, "that nothing but a deſire of giving ſatisfaction "to his conſcience, and a care of eſtabliſhing "the ſucceſſion to the crown in a right and un- "doubted line, had firſt procured him to contro- "vert this marriage; being for the reſt as happy "in the affections and virtues of his queen as any "prince living."

G. This indeed was acting the hypocrite to the life.

P. Nay, in this ſolemn proteſtation he perſonated the ſcrupulous man, as well in reference to the eſtabliſhment of the ſucceſſion in the right and undoubted line, as to his marriage; yet afterwards ſettled the ſucceſſion both on his daughter Mary by queen Catharine, and on his daughter Elizabeth by Anne Bolen: whereas it is manifeſt both could not be legitimate, nor by conſequence in the right and undoubted line of ſucceſſion to the crown. But what wonder is it, that mens' actions

actions ſhould be incoherent, when their hearts are double!

SECT. 2.

The Cauſe of the DIVORCE brought before JUDGES appointed by the POPE.

G. WELL, but what was the final iſſue of this important affair?

P. The pope finding himſelf preſſed ſo very hard by the king's agents at Rome to put a ſpeedy end to it, that it was not in his power either to reſiſt or elude their importunities any longer, gave at length a ſpecial commiſſion to cardinal Campeius, a perſon thoroughly verſed in the canon-law, by virtue whereof he and cardinal Woolſey, who was joined with him in the ſame commiſſion, were to act as judges in the cauſe, and had powers given them to ſummon the king and queen before their tribunal, as they did effectually not long after the arrival of Campeius in England. The place appointed for the hearing of the cauſe was the great hall in Black Friars, to which the king and queen being cited the laſt day of May An. 1529, they both appeared in perſon. Stow gives this relation of it, p. 543.

"The queen, according to the form being "called upon to come to the court, made no an- "ſwer, but roſe out of her chair, and came to "the king, kneeling down at his feet, to whom "ſhe ſaid;

"Sir, in what have I offended you? Or what "occaſion of diſpleaſure have I given you, in- "tending thus to put me from you? I take God "to be my judge, I have been to you a true and "humble wife, ever conformable to your will "and pleaſure, never contradicting or gainſaying "you in any thing; being always contented

"with

" with all things wherein you had any delight,
" or took any pleaſure, without grudge or coun-
" tenance of diſcontent or diſpleaſure. I loved
" for your ſake all them whom you loved, whe-
" ther I had cauſe or no, whether they were my
" friends or enemies. I have been your wife
" theſe 20 years or more, and you had by me
" diverſe children: And when you had me firſt,
" I take God to be my judge, that I was a maid:
" And whether it be true or no, I put it to your
" conſcience. If there be any juſt cauſe you can
" alledge againſt me, either of diſhoneſty, or mat-
" ter lawful to put me from you, I am content
" to depart to my ſhame and confuſion; and if
" there be none, then I pray you to let me have
" juſtice at your hands. The king, your father,
" was in his time of ſuch an excellent wit,
" that he was accounted amongſt all men for his
" wiſdom to be a ſecond Solomon. And the king
" of Spain, my father, Ferdinand, was accounted
" one of the wiſeſt princes that had reigned in
" Spain for many years. It is not therefore to be
" doubted, but that they gathered as wiſe coun-
" ſellors unto them of every realm, as in their
" wiſdoms they thought meet: And I conceive
" that there were in thoſe days as wiſe and well
" learned men in both realms, as be now at this
" day, who thought the marriage between you
" and me, good and lawful. Therefore it is a
" wonder to me, what new inventions are now
" invented againſt me. And now to put me to
" ſtand to the order and judgment of this court
" ſeems very unreaſonable. For you may con-
" demn me for want of being able to anſwer for
" myſelf, as having no counſel but ſuch as you
" aſſigned me, who cannot be indifferent on my
" part, ſince they are your ſubjects, and ſuch as
" you have taken and choſen out of your own

" counſel, whereunto they are privy, and dare " not diſcloſe your will and intent. Therefore " I humbly pray you to ſpare me, until I know " what counſel my friends in Spain will adviſe " me to take: And if you will not, then your " pleaſure be fulfilled. And with that ſhe aroſe " and departed." Thus Stow.

However my lord Herbert affirms, that ſhe appeared once more in perſon before the court; but it was only to proteſt againſt the two cardinals as incompetent judges: Requiring farther, that this her proteſtation might be recorded, and ſo departed preſently out of the court, p. 263.

After which the queen, being ſeveral times cited, and not appearing, was pronounced contumacious; and the court proceeded to the examination of witneſſes; whoſe depoſitions all centered in this one point, to wit, that the marriage between prince Arthur and queen Catharine, had been conſummated. The probability whereof, though nothing to the mean purpoſe, having no other foundation than bare gueſſes, grounded upon their having been bedded, and ſome joculatory words uttered by prince Arthur, could not be of ſufficient weight to counterbalance the queen's poſitive oath to the contrary, and her taking God to witneſs, that ſhe came a maid to Henry's bed: For the truth whereof ſhe appealed in open court to the king's own conſcience, who as ſoon as ſhe was retired, inſtead of denying it, ſpoke thus in the preſence of the commiſſioners—I will now in her abſence declare this unto you all, that ſhe has been unto me as true and obedient a wife, as I could wiſh or deſire. She has all the virtuous qualities, that ought to be in a woman of her dignity, or in any other of mean condition. She is alſo ſurely a woman nobly born. Her condition will well declare it, Stow, p. 543. And now I leave you or any one

one to judge, whether it be probable that a perſon of this character would publicly forſwear herſelf, and at the ſame time have the confidence to appeal to the king's own conſcience for the truth of what ſhe ſaid. An abandoned creature might do ſo, but not a princeſs of untainted honour and virtue.

But to proceed, the witneſſes againſt the queen being thus heard, and their depoſitions recorded, the cardinals adjourned the court to the Friday following, which was July 23. An. 1529, when it was expected they would have proceeded to a definitive ſentence; but to the king's great ſurpriſe and mortification, they again adjourned it from that day to the firſt of October; pretending that according to the method of the court of Rome, which Campeius ſaid they were bound to follow, no judiciary cauſes could be terminated during the general vacation of the harveſt and vintage already begun. However that be, it is certain Campeius had private inſtructions not to pronounce definitively till farther orders from the pope.

During this long interval the queen was not idle, but found means to acquaint the emperor with all that had paſſed, intreating him to eſpouſe her cauſe, as he did in effect. For he immediately diſpatched orators to Rome (as my lord Herbert ſtiles them) whom the queen likewiſe conſtituted her proctors, giving them a commiſſion and inſtructions to act in her name. Who therefore being come to Rome, entered a proteſtation in her name againſt the two legates in England, intreating the pope to revoke their commiſſion, and advocate the cauſe to himſelf; as likewiſe to warn the king to deſiſt from his ſuit, or at leaſt to conſent to have it judged at Rome. The iſſue whereof in ſhort was, that the pope being thus preſſed

by the emperor's orators, ſigned an advocation of the cauſe to himſelf, forbidding farther proceedings under great penalties. This put an end to Campeius's legantine power; who ſoon after took his leave of the king, and returned back to Rome.

SECT. 3.

Archbiſhop CRANMER's Character. He diſſolves the Marriage between K. Henry and Q. Catharine.

KING Henry finding himſelf thus diſappointed, and that nothing favourable to his inclinations was to be hoped for from the pope, reſolved to take a ſhorter courſe, which he knew could not fail. For he had taken care to provide himſelf with an archbiſhop of Canterbury and primate of England, named Thomas Cranmer, whoſe pliableneſs he was ſecure of. And indeed he was a ſure card, and in all reſpects fit for his purpoſe.

G. I have heard much talk and great diverſity of opinions concerning this archbiſhop Cranmer. But almoſt all the diſcourſes I have heard of him were either panegyrics or invectives. I ſhould therefore be glad to have a faithful and impartial character of the man.

P. Panegyrics and invectives are all but talking in the air, unleſs they are ſupported by unqueſtionable facts. For the ſureſt way of knowing men is by their actions, according to this ſaying of our Saviour, you ſhall know them by their fruits. However I ſhall only relate ſome of his moſt illuſtrious exploits, by which he diſtinguiſhed himſelf from all his predeceſſors in the ſee of Canterbury; amongſt whom (counting from St. Auguſtin downwards) we find ſo great a number in the catalogue of ſaints, that I believe there is not a dioceſs in Chriſtendom can ſhew the like, except we go back to the very primitive ages. So that if

if archbiſhop Cranmer appears to have been the very reverſe of theſe, both in faith and practice, I fear his character will give no great edification; and the credit of the Engliſh reformation will unavoidably ſuffer by having had ſuch a reformer at the head of it.

Firſt, then, biſhop Burnet, his greateſt admirer and profeſt encomiaſt, tells us of him in his hiſtory of the Engliſh reformation, 1. part, p. 92. that he was a Lutheran in his heart, even when he was but a private fellow in the univerſity of Cambridge, and it is a noted fact, that he appeared in all outward practices a ſtaunch Roman Catholic; and by conſequence diſſembled his religion from that time forwards till the end of king Henry's reign.

The king was no ſooner cold in his grave, but Cranmer threw off the maſk; and the duke of Somerſet (who was a rank Calviniſt, and had likewiſe diſſembled his religion as long as Henry lived) being made lord protector in the minority of Edward VI. he immediately became the duke's chief eccleſiaſtical inſtrument in puſhing on thoſe aſtoniſhing changes in the religion of his forefathers, which happened in that reign; ſo that of all the biſhops or archbiſhops that ever were in Great Britain, from the converſion of king Ethelbert down to the reign of Edward VI. Cranmer was the firſt that openly renounced the religion, which that great ſervant of God and preacher of the goſpel, St. Auguſtin, had planted in this iſland; and therefore, if apoſtatizing from the ancient faith, and broaching new doctrines, be the diſtinguiſhing character of a heretic, archbiſhop Cranmer has the juſteſt claim to that title: Since it is an unconteſted truth, that the religion he fell from was that which every Chriſtian upon earth, excepting ſome remains of he-

retics condemned by the four firſt general councils, did profeſs when it was brought into England by St. Auguſtin, and his followers; and that when Cranmer abandoned it, it had not only been publicly profeſſed and taught by the whole epiſcopal order and body of the clergy in Great Britain, but had likewiſe been ſupported by the whole legiſlative power of the Engliſh nation, without any public change during the ſpace of nine hundred years and upwards; notwithſtanding thoſe frequent revolutions in the ſtate, occaſioned by the invaſions of the Danes, the conqueſt of the Normans, the wars of the Barons, and thoſe between the houſes of Lancaſter and York, which divided the nation in every thing but religion, wherein all parties, intereſts, and factions continued to the very laſt. This then is the firſt noble exploit, whereby archbiſhop Cranmer diſtinguiſhed himſelf from all the archbiſhops that had gone before him for 900 years together. It is very ſtrange, indeed, that for the ſpace of 900 years there ſhould not be a biſhop or archbiſhop in the whole Engliſh nation either learned enough to ſee, or zealous enough to oppoſe the groſs errors (if they were really ſuch) which Cranmer undertook to reform; yet it either was ſo, or Cranmer's reformation was an impoſture: But it appears much more conſonant to reaſon to judge, that this reforming archbiſhop was an impoſtor, than that all the biſhops and archbiſhops of England before him were either dunces or prevaricators.

2dly, Archbiſhop Cranmer diſtinguiſhed himſelf in a very particular manner, by ſetting the firſt example of joining matrimony with epiſcopacy, contrary to the known laws and canons of the univerſal church, which he had vowed to obſerve at his admiſſion to holy orders. Nay, not content with this, whereas St. Paul declares a perſon unfit

unfit for the epiſcopal character, who had been married twice even in his lay-ſtate, 1 Tim. C. 3. v. 2. this good archbiſhop, after the death of his firſt wife married a ſecond; and though he kept his wife in a clandeſtine manner as long as king Henry lived, for fear of incurring the ſeverity of the law made againſt it by that prince, he lived openly with her in the reign of Edward VI. All which he owned at his trial under queen Mary. Burnet, 2 part, L. 2. p. 332. And it can ſcarce be queſtioned but that his inclination to the married ſtate rendered him ſo zealous for the reformation, as it did many more of his eccleſiaſtical brethren.

3dly, He was the firſt archbiſhop of Canterbury, who in order to obtain his bulls, took the oath of obedience to the pope, with a premeditated deſign not to keep it. That is, with a full reſolution to ſeparate himſelf from the pope's communion, ſtrip him of his ſpiritual ſupremacy in England, and beſtow it on the king, as he did in effect ſoon after his conſecration. Which if it was not downright perjury I know not what deſerves that name: though biſhop Burnet, who could not conceal the fact, labours hard to gloſs it over by ſaying, that before he took the oath, he made a ſolemn proteſtation, that he did not intend thereby to reſtrain himſelf from any thing, that he was bound to by his duty to God, the king or his country; and he renounced every thing in it that was contrary to any of theſe things, 1 Part, L. 2. p. 129. The true meaning whereof is, that he made a ſolemn proteſtation to God, that though he was going to take an oath of obedience to the pope, his conſcience would not permit him to keep it; and that therefore his real intention (as his actions ſhewed) was to renounce all obedience to him. And can any man doubt after this, but that archbiſhop Cranmer had a very different ſort of conſcience from all his

predeceſſors, who not only took that oath from the time it began to be tendered, but thought themſelves bound to keep it. Though indeed I do not find in any hiſtory, but that they complied with their duty to God, the king, and their country, as fully as if they had forſworn themſelves like Cranmer.

I only add, that by the help of ſuch a proteſtation, whether verbal or mental (if allowed of) the force of any oath may be eluded; becauſe the party to whom it is tendered, needs but keep this reſerve in his mind, that he will bind himſelf no further by it, than his conſcience will permit. And if that will excuſe a man from the guilt of perjury, all oaths of allegiance or abjuration, or of any other kind, though worded in the ſtrongeſt terms, may be broke through like cobwebs, and we muſt agree with Hudibras that,

Oaths are but words, and words but wind;
Too feeble implements to bind.

Of which commodious doctrine we may ſuſpect that Cranmer had no great abhorrence.

4thly, He was the firſt archbiſhop of Canterbury that ſhewed his dexterity in tying firſt, and then again untying the matrimonial knot; and this he performed twice with great ſucceſs in compliance with his royal maſter. To explain myſelf, king Henry was privately married to Anne Bolen in the preſence of archbiſhop Cranmer, (as the lord Herbert relates, p. 369) ſome months before the ſentence of the king's divorce from queen Catharine was pronounced by him. For this was not done, till ſhe appeared big with child. Mr. Collier adds, p. 76. that after Cranmer had pronounced the ſentence of divorce, he held another court at Lambeth, where he confirmed the king's marriage with the new queen Anne. All which notwithſtanding, as ſoon as this unfortunate perſon was convicted of diſhoneſty, and ſentenced

to

to loſe her head, the king reſolved farther to be divorced from her; that is, to have his marriage with her declared void: which alſo was performed by archbiſhop Cranmer, ſays the ſame lord Herbert, p. 448.

After that again the king was ſolemnly married to the lady Anne of Cleves, with the expreſs approbation of the ſame archbiſhop Cranmer ſitting in council, who ſolved all ſcruples and difficulties relating to that match, p. 516: all which notwithſtanding this complaiſant archbiſhop, perceiving that the king (who had taken a liking to the lady Catharine Howard, p. 518.) hated his wife, made no difficulty to join with others in the diſſolution of this marriage.

5thly, He was the firſt archbiſhop of Canterbury, that gave up the eccleſiaſtical authority to ſecular hands, betrayed the ancient immunities of the church, and ſacrificed her patrimony to the luſt and avarice of his prince; as is atteſted by all hiſtorians both Proteſtants and Catholics.

6thly, And laſtly, he diſtinguiſhed himſelf but a few days before his death no leſs, than he had done in the courſe of his life; for whilſt he lay under ſentence of condemnation, he perjured himſelf twice in hopes of the queen's pardon; which fact is related and very finely daubed over by biſhop Burnet, p. 334, 335, who compares his weakneſs and fall with St. Peter's denial of Chriſt, and brings off his hero with flying colours.

Theſe were the moſt diſtinguiſhing actions of the famous Thomas Cranmer, the firſt Proteſtant archbiſhop in Great Britain; to which high ſtation king Henry, who had taken the true ſize of his conſcience, preferred him, whilſt he was yet negociating the buſineſs of the divorce in Germany; as judging him the fitteſt perſon to put

a ſpeedy end to it by a definitive ſentence; which he readily performed, as ſoon as the king called upon him for that important piece of ſervice.

G. The picture you have here placed before me of archbiſhop Cranmer, muſt needs be a faithful copy of the original, ſince you have drawn every feature of it from his own actions, as related not by his enemies but by his friends. However, ſince mens' taſtes and fancies differ in moſt other things as well as meats, what appears a monſter to you and me, may perhaps be a beauty to a true Proteſtant eye.

P. That may very well be. Nay, I am ſure he appeared very beautiful to biſhop Burnet's eyes; who, though he has furniſhed me with moſt of the hiſtorical facts I have mentioned, ſtiles him a holy ſaint and martyr, and relates of him, that though his body was reduced to aſhes, the fire ſpared his heart, p. 335.

G. That is very ſtrange: For I preſume that Proteſtant biſhops will not allow of miracles.

P. No: For he ſays expreſsly, that if this had happened in our church, we ſhould have made a miracle of it. Ibid.

G. I am wholly of his mind: For ſuch a thing cannot poſſibly be aſcribed to any natural cauſe.

P. Nay, what completes the paradox, he himſelf relates it as a teſtimony of the archbiſhop's innocence; for he concludes from it, that though his hand erred, (to wit, in ſubſcribing twice before his death to a formal abjuration of the errors of Luther and Zuinglius) yet his heart had continued true; ibid: and was therefore ſpared by the fire.

G. That is both nonſenſe and contradiction with a vengeance: For the moral guilt of outward actions is in the heart, not in it's outward inſtrument, the hand; which therefore ought rather

ther to have been ſpared, as being the leſs guilty of the two. But be that as it will, if the preſervation of the archbiſhop's heart was not miraculous, and yet cannot be aſcribed to any natural cauſe (for if it could, it would not be a teſtimony of innocence) that is, if it was neither natural nor ſupernatural, I may conclude, without offence, that biſhop Burnet's fine ſtory, wherever he has picked it up, is a mere tale of a tub, and ſerves only to render both himſelf and his holy ſaint and martyr ridiculous. But pray, Sir, proceed to what you have farther to ſay concerning the divorce.

P. Archbiſhop Cranmer gave the finiſhing ſtroke to it by a definitive ſentence in the month of May, An. 1533. Queen Catherine being then at Ampthil in Bedfordſhire, whither the king ſent ſome of his council to lay before her the reaſons of his ſecond marriage, and exhorts her to ſubmit to it. But ſhe perſiſting to proteſt againſt it, the archbiſhop cited her to appear at Duſtable, ſix miles off; where he appointed a court to be held; to which the queen being cited for fifteen days together, and not appearing, he firſt pronounced her contumacious, and then proceeded to give ſentence, whereby (according to the ſtile of it) he pronounced, decreed, and declared, that the marriage between K. Henry and the princeſs Catharine, had been void, null, and invalid, from the very beginning; and that it was unlawful for them to live any more together as huſband and wife. That therefore he ſeparated and divorced them, and in conſequence pronounced, decreed, and declared them to be ſeparated and divorced. Which ſentence he ordered to be publicly read in our Lady's chapel, in the priory of Dunſtable. And then ſent to the king to know his farther pleaſure; Who thereupon gave a ſtrict charge that Catharine ſhould be no

more

more called Queen, but Princeſs Dowager, and Widow of prince Arthur.

Thus ended the buſineſs of the divorce, which we may juſtly call the ſhame and ſcandal of the nation. But as it often happens, that the maintaining of one falſe ſtep wilfully made by a man in power, engages him in an endleſs train of enormous crimes; it fell out juſt ſo to the unfortunate king Henry; the remainder of whoſe reign, after the divorce from queen Catharine, was nothing but a continual ſeries of rapine, ſacrilege, bloodſhed, and all ſuch irregularities, as the paſſions of avarice, luxury, and revenge are wont to ſuggeſt to perſons delivered up by God to a reprobate ſenſe, and armed with a power to gratify their vicious inclinations in an arbitrary manner. So that he fully verified the character given of him by Sir Walter Raleigh, to wit, that if all the patterns of a mercileſs prince had been loſt in the world, they might have been found in this one king: Who had ſtruck ſuch a terror into the clergy as well as laity, and held his parliament as well as council and courts of juſtice, in ſuch an awe of him, that very few durſt openly oppoſe his will: Inſomuch that every thing, though ever ſo unwarrantable, was tranſacted under the plauſible appearance of parliamentary proceedings, and the regular courſe of juſtice: And thoſe who had the courage to oppoſe the torrent, and refuſe to bend their knees to Baal, ſoon felt the ſmart of the king's indignation, as I ſhall ſhew you immediately.

SECT.

SECT. 4.

King HENRY is declared Supreme Head of the Church of ENGLAND, in Spirituals.

G. SIR, as nothing is either more inſtructive or engaging than hiſtory, I deſire to know what happened upon the concluſion of the divorce. Becauſe the deciſion of a buſineſs of that importance, could not but be attended with extraordinary conſequences.

P. What you ſay, Sir, is very true. The firſt thing therefore king Henry did, after his being ſolemnly excommunicated by Clement VII. on the ſcore of his ſecond marriage, was to throw off all obedience to the ſee apoſtolic, and get himſelf declared ſupreme head of the church of England in ſpirituals: a moſt ſtupendous attempt, contrary to the expreſs inſtitution of Chriſt, and unknown to all antiquity! However, to make every thing appear with the authority of the nation ſtamped upon it, he called two parliaments, one in the beginning, the other towards the end of the year 1534. In the firſt, amongſt other things, it was enacted; "That whereas the clergy had "truly acknowledged, that the convocation is al- "ways aſſembled by the king's authority, and "had promiſed his majeſty, that they would not "from thenceforth make or alledge any new con- "ſtitutions without his highneſs's aſſent or li- "cence: and whereas diverſe conſtitutions pro- "vincial and ſynodal, formerly enacted are thought "to be prejudicial to the king's prerogative—— "and the clergy had therefore humbly beſeeched "his majeſty, that the ſaid conſtitutions and "canons might be committed to the examina- "tion of thirty two men named by his majeſty, "to wit, ſixteen of both houſes of parliament,

"and

" and ſixteen of the clergy, who might annul or " confirm the ſame as they found cauſe; it was " enacted that his highneſs ſhould at his pleaſure " appoint thirty two men as aforeſaid, to ſurvey " the ſaid canons and conſtitutions for the confir- " mation or abolition of the ſame."

Here we have a committee eſtabliſhed of thirty two perſons, half laymen, and veſted with full power to aboliſh any eccleſiaſtical canon or conſtitution anciently made by the authority of a provincial or national ſynod. So that if the ſixteen laymen, who were put upon the level with the ſame number of the clergy in the regulation of eccleſiaſtical affairs, could but gain over to their ſide any one clergyman of the whole committee, which was to be entirely modeled and packed by the court, any thing they pleaſed was ſure to paſs by the plurality of voices.

G. But how came it, that the clergy was ſo forward in this buſineſs, as to become petitioners to the king for the paſſing of this act?

P. Sir, it came thus to paſs. The king had ſome time before trepanned the whole body of the clergy into a premunire, for acknowledging cardinal Woolſey's legatine power, though he had the king's broad ſeal for the exerciſing of it. Now by this premunire their perſons became liable to impriſonment for life, and their eſtates to confiſcation; ſo that both the one and the other were entirely at the king's mercy. But it ſeems the generality of them were not fond of ſuffering a lingring martyrdom, and they had but one way to prevent the execution of the premunire, which was an entire ſubmiſſion in matters of religion to the king; who (ſays Dr. Heylin) peremptorily required of them, that no conſtitution or ordinance ſhould thenceforth be enacted, promulged, or put in execution by the clergy, unleſs the king's highneſs approved

approved of it; to which they abſolutely ſubmitted: Anno. 1532. And ſo it is no wonder, that they ſhould be mentioned in the aboveſaid acts as perſons running into all the meaſures of the court; becauſe the ſame motive of fear, which had made them turn prevaricators before, ſubſiſting ſtill, they thought it better and ſafer to comply with a good grace, than be dragged to it like bears to the ſtake.

Thus you ſee king Henry had brought the Engliſh clergy under his ſpiritual juriſdiction, and begun to act as ſupreme head of the church of England, even before that title was ſettled upon him and his heirs and ſucceſſors in a parliamentary way; which was not done till the meeting of the next parliament in the ſame year, 1534; wherein the following act paſſed, viz.

"That albeit the king was ſupreme head of "the church of England, and had been ſo recog- "nized by the clergy of this realm in their con- "vocation; yet for more corroboration thereof, "as alſo for extirpating all errors, hereſies, and "abuſes of the ſame, it was enacted, that the "king, his heirs and ſucceſſors, kings of Eng- "land, ſhould be accepted and reputed the ſu- "preme head on earth of the church of England, "and have and enjoy united and annexed to the "imperial crown of this realm as well the title "and ſtile thereof, as all honours, dignities, pre- "eminences, juriſdictions, privileges, authori- "ties, immunities, profits and commodities to "the ſaid dignity of ſupreme head of the ſame "church belonging or appertaining. And that "our ſaid ſovereign lord, his heirs and ſucceſſors, "kings of this realm, ſhall have full power and "authority from time to time to viſit and repreſs, "redreſs, reform, order, correct, reſtrain, and "amend all ſuch errors, hereſies, abuſes, of- "fences,

" fences, contempts and enormities, whatſoever " they be, which by any manner of ſpiritual au- " thority or juriſdiction, ought or may lawfully " be reformed, repreſſed, ordered, redreſſed, cor- " rected, reſtrained or amended, moſt to the plea- " ſure of A. G. the encreaſe of virtue in Chriſt's " religion, and the conſervation of the peace, " unity, and tranquillity of the realm: any uſage, " cuſtom, foreign laws, foreign preſcription, or " any thing or things to the contrary thereof " notwithſtanding."

This is that act, which made the firſt change in the religion of our anceſtors: For though ſome acts had paſſed in former reigns to put a ſtop to ſome abuſes committed by the pope's legates in England, as likewiſe to prevent any unreaſonable encroachments of the court of Rome (becauſe the moſt lawful and beſt eſtabliſhed authority may be abuſed) yet the pope's title to the ſpiritual ſupremacy over the univerſal church, had always been acknowledged by the whole body of the Engliſh nation, as belonging to him by divine right, and inviolably maintained as an article of the Chriſtian faith. So far were our forefathers from entertaining any thoughts of placing the crown and mitre upon the ſame head, or authorizing the hand that ſwayed the ſcepter to ſtretch itſelf forth to the cenſer. This, on the contrary, was in all former ages regarded as a ſacrilegious attempt, and a violation of Chriſt's own inſtitution, who never appointed kings but biſhops to govern his church in ſpiritual matters.

We read indeed of ſome princes, and thoſe none of the beſt, who have endeavoured to encroach upon the ancient immunities of the church. But they were always vigorouſly oppoſed, and their attempts proved generally unſucceſsful. But to veſt the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction and authority

thority in the perſon of a layman; nay, and entail it like farms or manors upon his heirs and ſucceſſors, whether women or infants, was a proceeding not only without precedent in all the former ages of Chriſtianity, but has never ſince been followed by any other Chriſtian nation in the world. It was in effect invading the ſanctuary with armed force, and reducing the church into a province of the ſtate. So that I may modeſtly call it one of the moſt ſtupendous actions recorded in hiſtory: And it is ſuch a ſtain upon the very infancy of the pretended godly reformation, as can never be wiped off. Yet it was this very act, that laid the foundation of it, and the whole ſuperſtructure of the Engliſh reformation was built upon this foundation; it being apparent that all the three reforming princes, to wit, king Henry, Edward VI. and queen Elizabeth undertook that work, neither in the name, nor by the authority of the prelatic order, but by virtue of their own ſpiritual ſupremacy: that is, as ſupreme judges in controverſies of religion.

G. But did not the whole body of the Engliſh clergy conſent freely to it, ſo as to make it their own act and deed?

P. It is certain the major part aſſented to it, but not freely; becauſe they did not aſſent to it, till it was altogether unſafe for them to oppoſe it. For who can deny, but that the imminent danger of a premunire is a terrible reſtraint upon the freedom of votes? And I leave it to the judgment of any Proteſtant, whether if the pope at the head of a council ſhould threaten the biſhops aſſembled in it with perpetual impriſonment and confiſcation of goods, in caſe they ſhould refuſe to come into his meaſures, whether, I ſay, that council would be free? Yet this was all the freedom the Engliſh clergy had in reference to the act in queſtion

tion; that is to ſay, they were perfectly free either to comply with the court, or rot in priſon.

G. But have not all ſovereign princes the ſupreme authority in their reſpective dominions over the clergy as well as laity?

P. I never heard it doubted by any man in his ſenſes. For every king, as ſuch, has the ſupreme authority over all his ſubjects; and churchmen are his ſubjects no leſs than laymen. But what is this to the plain meaning and intention of the act we ſpeak of? For there needed no act of parliament to make king Henry the ſupreme temporal head and governor of the whole body of his people, ſince no man upon earth diſputed that title with him: It therefore beſtowed upon him either more than this, or nothing at all. In a word, it beſtowed upon him that ſupreme ſpiritual juriſdiction and authority of which they had diſpoſſeſſed the pope: and that differs as much from the temporal juriſdiction and authority of kings, as the regal and epiſcopal characters differ from one another; or as the functions of a prieſt differ from thoſe of a civil or military officer, who all act in different capacities, and move in different ſpheres.

I inſiſt ſo particularly upon this, becauſe when the act of ſupremacy (which was repealed in queen Mary's reign) was again renewed in favour of queen Elizabeth, and great numbers appeared grievouſly ſcandalized at it, the thing ſeeming to be abhorrent (ſays Dr. Heylin) even to nature and policy, that a woman ſhould be declared ſupreme head on earth of the church of England; I find, that to cover the ſcandal of it, the compoſers of the thirty-nine articles of religion were obliged to gloſs it over with this ſtrained interpretation, viz. That the act meant no more than to give that prerogative to the queen, which had been given to all godly

godly princes in holy ſcriptures by God himſelf; that is to rule all eſtates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be eccleſiaſtical or temporal, and reſtrain with the civil ſword the ſtubborn and evil doers. Art. 37. But who ſees not that this was but a gilding of the pill to make it go down the better, and mere trifling inſtead of a ſerious explanation of the act? But more of this hereafter.

G. But may we not take the oath of ſupremacy with this interpretation tacked to it?

P. I ſhould be loath to do it; and my reaſon is, becauſe oaths are ſacred things, and not to be trifled with: Nor can any man warrant me to ſwear one thing, and mean another. As I cannot, for example, ſwear that the king of Great Britain is the czar of Muſcovy; though he that ſhould tender this oath, ſhould aſſure me, that nothing more was meant by it, than that the king of Great Britain is the ſupreme head and governor in his own dominions, as the czar of Muſcovy is in his. Becauſe though this interpretation imports a real truth, it differs wholly from the obvious meaning of the words of the oath.

G. However I do not find the aboveſaid act gave king Henry any power either to preach the word, or adminiſter the ſacraments. And what then was his ſupreme headſhip any more than an empty title? And was there any harm in making the king and his heirs the compliment of a title, that ſignified nothing?

P. It is very true, the act did not give king Henry the power to preach the word, or adminiſter the ſacraments. For that would have been too groſs: but you are under a great miſtake in imagining, that it beſtowed upon him a mere empty title. For in the firſt place it made him ſupreme judge in all controverſies of religion, by giving

giving him full power to viſit, repreſs, redreſs, reform, order, correct, reſtrain and amend all errors, hereſies, and abuſes whatſoever, which by any manner of ſpiritual authority or juriſdiction may lawfully be reformed, repreſſed, redreſſed, &c. The plain meaning whereof is, that he had the ſame full power given him to govern the church of England in all ſpiritual and eccleſiaſtical matters, as the pope in quality of ſupreme head of the the univerſal church, and the whole body of biſhops, in quality of ordinaries in their ſeveral dioceſes, ever had before him. Which power was likewiſe to deſcend to his heirs and ſucceſſors, whether infants or women. And was there nothing intended by all this but an empty title?

But 2dly, by impowering him to viſit with ſupreme authority, it united, as I may ſay, in his perſon alone the whole epiſcopal juriſdiction of the nation; which before was divided, as in other national churches, among the biſhops, to whom alone it belonged to viſit, and that only in their own reſpective dioceſes according to the canons. So that he degraded in a manner the whole prelatic order; or at leaſt rendered the exerciſe of their juriſdiction wholly precarious: and they were after that no better than the king's vicars in ſpirituals; which was giving him a greater power than any pope had ever claimed by virtue of his ſpiritual ſupremacy.

3dly, It gave the king a power to reviſe and annul any eccleſiaſtical decree or conſtitution, though enacted by the whole body of the Engliſh clergy, who by that means were diveſted of their divine right of feeding and guiding their reſpective flocks, and became mere executors of the king's arbitrary will.

This was the power king Henry obliged the parliament to make him a preſent of, and the clergy

clergy to truckle to. I ſay obliged, for their voting was but a form extorted by fear; and they gave up the rights of the church with juſt as much freedom as a man delivers his purſe, when he has a piſtol preſented to his breaſt. But I ſhould be glad to know, from which of the apoſtles king Henry deſcended? And if he could not derive his eccleſiaſtical pedigree from any apoſtolical family, what title had he to accept of a commiſſion to govern any part of the church of Chriſt, who committed the whole government of his church to none but the apoſtles and their ſucceſſors? However, right or wrong, king Henry accepted it.

G. I perceive he made no ſcruple of any ſin, but that of keeping an old woman for his wife.

P. Nay he not only accepted it, but ſoon gave the Engliſh clergy an illuſtrious ſpecimen of the authority they had veſted him with. For being now made ſupreme head of the church of England in ſpirituals, he could not well be without a vicar general; or, as my lord Herbert ſtiles him, vicegerent general of the king's authority in eccleſiaſtical affairs, which is moſt certainly an eccleſiaſtical dignity. And who do you think was the perſon he pitched upon for this eminent ſtation?

G. That is more than I can gueſs. But according to my weak apprehenſion, I conceive it to be moſt probable, that it was either the archbiſhop of Canterbury, who is primate of England, or at leaſt ſome other eminent biſhop.

P. Indeed, Sir, you are very much out of the way in your gueſs. It was one Thomas Cromwell, a layman, and the ſon of a blackſmith.

G. I ſhould as ſoon have gueſſed that he had made a corn-cutter his prime miniſter of ſtate, or his coachman high admiral of England.

P. I believe

P. I believe ſo; for the one was as repugnant to the eſtabliſhed laws of church government, as the other would have been to the common rules of policy. Yet ſo it was; and the fact is thus ſet down by Sir Richard Baker:

"Thomas Cromwell, ſon to a blackſmith in "Putney, being raiſed to high dignities, was laſtly "made vicar general under the king in all eccle- "ſiaſtical affairs: Who ſat divers times in the "convocation houſe, amongſt the biſhops, as head "over them," p. 408.

This is confirmed by my lord Herbert, in whoſe hiſtory of king Henry, p. 468, I find, that in a ſynod of about twenty biſhops, thirty-nine abbots and priors, and fifty of the inferior clergy, being held to ſettle ſome articles of religion, they were ſubſcribed to in the firſt place by Thomas Cromwell, and after him by Thomas of Canterbury, John of London, &c. And I find the ſame order of ſubſcriptions afterwards to a decree relating to general councils, p. 470. So that although this was a ſynod held by the metropolitan of Canterbury, it was not the archbiſhop of that ſee, but Thomas Cromwell that preſided in it. This worthy perſon was likewiſe conſtituted the king's viſitor, or rather plunderer general, of all the abbeys, priories, and monaſteries, both of men and women, within the kingdom; a great number of mercenary tools of the court being appointed to ſerve under him as their maſter-workman: And from the extent of Cromwell's commiſſion on this occaſion, we may gather the full extent of the royal prerogative in ſpirituals. I ſhall deliver it in Mr. Collier's words, 2d part, 2d book, p. 104, 105.

"Cromwell (ſays he) being authorized by the "king's letters patents, under the broad ſeal, to "conſtitute deputies for a viſitation, made choice "of Richard Layton, Thomas Leigh, William "Petre,

" Petre, doctors of the law; doctor John Lon-
" don, dean of Wallingford, &c. for this pur-
" poſe.

" And now the time for the viſitation draw-
" ing on, the king iſſued out letters of inhibition
" to the archbiſhop of Canterbury, charging him
" and his ſuffragans not to viſit the clergy or reli-
" gious, till the royal viſitation was over; mean-
" ing that which was to be managed under the
" vicar general Cromwell. And thus all epiſco-
" pal juriſdiction was laid aſleep, and almoſt ſtruck
" dead by the regal, during the king's pleaſure.
" The archbiſhop of Canterbury directed his man-
" date to the biſhop of London, who was to tranſ-
" mit copies of the inhibition to the reſt of the
" provincial biſhops.

" The next month, Layton, Leigh, London,
" &c. began their general viſitation under Crom-
" well. They were furniſhed, at leaſt ſome of
" thoſe firſt named, with a plenitude of power to
" viſit all archbiſhops, biſhops, and the reſt of the
" inferior clergy; and to correct and reform, and
" exerciſe all manner of diſcipline, which belong-
" ed to eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction; they had like-
" wiſe an authority to confirm or null the
" elections of prelates, to order inſtalments, to
" give inſtitutions and inductions, to ſequeſter
" the fruits of livings, to deprive or ſuſpend arch-
" biſhops, biſhops &c. to convene ſynods and
" preſide in them, and to make ſuch reformations
" and orders, as they ſhall think expedient. They
" had likewiſe an authority of trying all eccle-
" ſiaſtical cauſes, and exerting the cenſures of
" the church upon thoſe, who either refuſed to
" appear, or abide by the ſentence, And as
" to monaſteries, they had, as it were, an un-
" limited authority, and were impowered to allow
" penſions

" penſions to ſuch as were diſpoſed to quit that " way of living."

Such was the exorbitant commiſſion even of the ſub-delegates, who acted under the king's vicar general. And as to their viſitation of monaſteries it is hard to ſay, whether the motives upon which they acted, or the means they employed, or the inhumanities they practiſed in the execution of their commiſſion, were more unchriſtian.

I ſhall give you a relation of it in the very words of Sir William Dugdale, whoſe teſtimony is above all exception. But if a reformation ſet on foot by ſuch wicked inſtruments, as you have already ſeen the moſt active in it, and promoted by ſuch unchriſtian means and contrivances, as will now be laid before you, can be looked upon by any ſober thinking man as the work of God, I may boldly ſay the enemy of man never had a part in any wickedneſs committed by mankind. The relation is ſomewhat long, but deſerves your moſt ſerious attention.

SECT. 5.

Sir WILLIAM DUGDALE's Account of the Diſſolution of Religious Houſes in the Reign of Henry VIII.

THE account Sir William Dugdale has given us of the methods and contrivances uſed in the diſſolution of abbeys and monaſteries, is taken out of the celebrated hiſtory of Warwickſhire, p. 801; where ſpeaking of the diſſolution of a particular monaſtery of nuns, called Poleſworth, he takes occaſion to give the following relation of the diſſolution of all the other monaſteries and abbeys in the kingdom:

" I find it left recorded by the commiſſioners, " that were employed to take ſurrender of the " monaſteries

" monaſteries in this ſhire, An. 29 Henry VIII. " that after ſtrict ſcrutiny not only by the fame " of the country, but by examination of ſeveral " perſons, they found theſe nuns virtuous and re- " ligious women, and of good converſation. Ne- " verthelefs it was not the ſtrict and regular lives " of theſe devout ladies, nor any thing that " might be ſaid in behalf of the monaſteries, that " could prevent their ruin then approaching. " So great an aim had the king to make himſelf " thereby glorious, and many others no leſs hopes " to be enriched in a conſiderable manner. " But to the end that ſuch a change ſhould not " overwhelm thoſe that might be active therein, " in regard the people every-where had no ſmall " eſteem of theſe houſes for their devout and " daily exerciſes in prayer, alms-deeds, hoſpita- " lity, and the like, whereby not only the ſouls " of their deceaſed anceſtors had much benefit, " as was then thought, but themſelves, the poor, " as alſo ſtrangers and pilgrims, conſtant advan- " tage; there wanted not the moſt ſubtle con- " trivances to effect this ſtupendous work, that " I think any age has beheld; whereof it will not " be thought impertinent, I preſume, to take here " a ſhort view."

" In order therefore to it was that, which " cardinal Wooliey had done for the founding his " colleges in Oxford and Ipſwich, made a prece- " dent; viz. the diſſolving of above thirty re- " ligious houſes, moſt very ſmall ones, by the " licence of the king and pope Clement VII. " And that it might be the better carried on, Mr. " Thomas Cromwell, who had been an old ſervant " to the cardinal, and not a little active in that, " was the chief perſon pitched upon to aſſiſt " therein. For I look upon this buſineſs as not " originally deſigned by the king, but by ſome

" principal ambitious men of that age, who pro-
" jected to themſelves all worldly advantages ima-
" ginable through that deluge of wealth, which
" was like to flow amongſt them by this hideous
" ſtorm.

" Firſt therefore, having inſinuated to the
" king matter of profit and honour, (viz. profit
" by ſo vaſt enlargement of his revenue, and ho-
" nour in being able to maintain mighty armies to
" recover his right in France, as alſo to ſtrengthen
" himſelf againſt the pope, whoſe ſupremacy he
" himſelf aboliſhed, and make the firmer alli-
" ance with ſuch princes as had done the like) did
" they procure Cranmer's advancement to the ſee
" of Canterbury, and more of the Proteſtant
" clergy to other biſhoprieks and high places; to
" the end that the reſt ſhould not be able in a full
" council to carry any thing againſt their deſign;
" ſending out preachers to perſuade the people
" to ſtand faſt to the king without fear of the
" pope's curſe, or his diſſolving their allegi-
" ance.

" Next, that it might be more plauſibly carried
" on, care was taken ſo to repreſent the lives of
" monks, nuns, canons, &c. to the world, as
" that the leſs regret might be made at their ruin.
" To which purpoſe Tho. Cromwell being con-
" ſtituted general viſitor, employed ſundry perſons,
" who acted therein their parts accordingly: viz.
" Rich. Layton, Tho. Leigh, and Wm. Petre
" doctors of law; Dr. John London, dean of
" Wallingford and others; by which they were to
" enquire into the behaviour of the religious of
" both ſexes: which commiſſioners the better
" to manage their deſign, gave encouragement to
" the monks, not only to accuſe their governors,
" but to inform againſt each other; compelling them
" alſo to produce the charters and evidences of

" their

" their lands, as alſo their plate and money, " and to give an inventory thereof. And here- " unto they added certain injunctions from the " king, containing moſt ſevere and ſtrict rules; " by means whereof divers being found obnoxious " to their cenſure were expelled; and many diſ- " cerning themſelves not able to live free from " ſome exception or advantage that might be " taken againſt them, deſired to leave their " habit.

" Having by theſe viſitors thus ſearched into " their lives (which by a black book, containing " a world of enormities, were repreſented in no " ſmall meaſure ſcandalous) to the end that the " people might be better ſatisfied with their pro- " ceedings, it was thought convenient to ſuggeſt, " that the leſſer houſes for want of good govern- " ment were chiefly guilty of theſe crimes that " were laid to their charge; and ſo they did, " as appears by the preamble to that act for their " diſſolution made in the twenty-ſeventh of Henry " VIII. which parliament (conſiſting in the moſt " part of ſuch members as were packed for the " purpoſe through private intereſt, as is evident " by divers original letters of that time, many " of the nobility for the like reſpects alſo favour- " ing the deſign) aſſented to the ſuppreſſing of " all ſuch houſes as had been certified of leſs value " than 200 pounds per annum, and giving them " with their lands and revenues to the king; " yet ſo as not only the religious perſons therein " ſhould be committed to the great and honour- " able monaſteries of the realm, where they " might be compelled to live religiouſly for the " reformation of their lives, wherein thanks be " to God, religion is well kept and obſerved (they " are the words of the act) but that the poſſeſ- " ſions belonging to ſuch houſes ſhould be con-

" verted to better uſes, to the pleaſure of Al-
" mighty God, and the honour and profit of the
" realm.

" But how well the tenor thereof was purſued
" we ſhall ſee; theſe ſpecious pretences being
" made uſe of for no other purpoſe, than by open-
" ing this gap to make way for the total ruin of
" the greater houſes, wherein it is by the ſaid act
" acknowledged, that religion was ſo well ob-
" ſerved. For no ſooner were the monks, &c.
" turned out, and the houſes demoliſhed (that
" being firſt thought requiſite, leſt ſome acciden-
" tal change might conduce to their reſtitution)
" but care was taken to prefer ſuch perſons to
" the ſuperiority in government upon any va-
" cancy in thoſe greater houſes, as might be in-
" ſtrumental to their ſurrender, by tampering with
" the convent to that purpoſe; whoſe activeneſs
" was ſuch, that within the ſpace of two years
" ſeveral convents were wrought upon, and com-
" miſſioners ſent down to take them at their hands
" to the king's uſe; of which number I find that
" beſides the before ſpecified doctors of law, there
" were 34 commiſſioners.

" The truth is, that there was no omiſſion
" of any endeavours that can well be imagined
" to accompliſh theſe ſurrenders; for ſo ſubtilly
" did the commiſſioners act their parts, as that
" after earneſt ſolicitation with the abbots, and
" finding them backward, they firſt tempted them
" with good penſions during life; whereby they
" found ſome forward enough to promote the
" work, as the abbot of Hales in Glouceſter-
" ſhire was, who had high commendation for
" it from the commiſſioners, as their letters to
" the viſitor general do manifeſt. So likewiſe
" had the abbot of Ramſey and the prior of
" Ely. Nay ſome were ſo obſequious, that after

" they

" they had wrought the ſurrender of their own " houſes, they were employed as commiſſioners " to perſuade others, as the prior of Giſborn in " Yorkſhire for one. Neither were the cour- " tiers inactive in driving on this work; as " may be ſeen by the lord chancellor Audley's " employing a ſpecial agent to treat with the " abbot of Athelney, and to offer him 100 marks " per annum penſion in caſe he would ſurrender; " which the abbot refuſed, inſiſting upon a greater " ſum; and the perſonal endeavours he uſed " with the abbot of S. Oſithe in Eſſex, as by his " letter to the viſitor general, wherein it is ſigni- " fied, that he had with great ſolicitation pre- " vailed with the ſaid abbot; but withal inſinuat- " ing his deſire, that his place of lord chancel- " lor being very chargeable, the king might be " moved for an addition of ſome more profitable " offices unto him. Nay, I find that this great " man, the lord chancellor, hunting eagerly after " the abbey of Walden in Eſſex, (out of the ruins " whereof afterwards that magnificent fabrick call- " ed by the name of Audley-Inn was built) as an " argument to obtain it, did, beſides the extenu- " ation of it's worth, alledge, that he had in this " world ſuſtained great damage and infamy in " ſerving the king, which the grant of that ſhould " recompenſe.

" Amongſt the particular arguments which " were made uſe of by thoſe that were averſe to " ſurrender, I find that the abbot of Feverſham " alledged the antiquity of their monaſtery's " foundation, viz. by king Stephen, whoſe " body, with the bodies of the queen and prince " lay there interred, and for whom were uſed " continual ſuffrages and commendations by " prayers. Yet it would not avail; for they " were reſolved to effect what they had begun by

" one means or other; in ſo much, that they pro-
" cured the biſhop of London to come to the
" nuns of Sion with their confeſſor to ſolicit them
" thereunto; who after many perſuaſions took it
" upon their conſciences that they ought to ſub-
" mit unto the king's pleaſure therein by God's
" law. But what could not be effected by ſuch
" arguments and fair promiſes (which were not
" wanting nor unfulfilled, as appears by the large
" penſions that ſome active monks and canons had
" in compariſon of others, even to a fifth or ſix-
" fold proportion more than ordinary) was by ter-
" ror and ſevere dealing brought to paſs. For
" under pretence of dilapidation in the buildings,
" or negligent adminiſtration of their offices, as
" alſo for breaking the king's injunctions, they de-
" prived ſome abbots, and then put others that
" were more pliant in their rooms.

" From others they took their convent ſeals,
" to the end they might not by making leaſes or
" or ſale of their jewels raiſe money either for
" ſupply of their preſent wants, or payment of
" their debts, and ſo be neceſſitated to ſurrender.
" Nay, to ſome, as in particular to the canons of
" Leiceſter, the commiſſioners threatened, that
" they would charge them with adultery and bug-
" gery, unleſs they would ſubmit. And Dr. Lon-
" don told the nuns of Godſtow, that becauſe he
" found them obſtinate, he would diſſolve the
" houſe by virtue of the king's commiſſion, in ſpite
" of their teeth. And yet all was ſo managed that
" the king was ſolicited to accept of them; not
" being willing to have it thought they were by
" terror moved thereunto, and ſpecial notice was
" taken of ſuch as gave out that their ſurrender
" was by compulſion.

" Which courſes (after ſo many, that through
" under-hand corruption led the way) brought

" on

" on others apace; as appears by their dates,
" which I have obſerved from the very inſtru-
" ments themſelves; in ſo much that the reſt
" ſtood amazed, not knowing which way to turn
" themſelves. Some therefore thought fit to try,
" whether money might ſave their houſes from
" this diſmal fate ſo near at hand; the abbot
" of Peterborough offering 2500 marks to the
" king and 300 pounds to the viſitor general.
" Others with great conſtancy refuſed to be thus
" acceſſary in violating the donations of their
" pious founders. But theſe, as they were not
" many, ſo did they taſte of no little ſeverity.
" For touching the abbot of Fountaines in York-
" ſhire I find, that being charged by the commiſ-
" ſioners for taking into his private hands ſome
" jewels belonging to that monaſtery, which they
" called theft and ſacrilege, they pronounced
" him perjured, and ſo depoſing him extorted a
" private reſignation. And it appears that the
" monks of the charter-houſe in the ſuburbs of
" London were committed to newgate; where
" with hard and barbarous uſage five of them
" died, and five more lay at the point of death,
" as the commiſſioners ſignified, but withal al-
" ledged, that the ſuppreſſion of that houſe, be-
" ing of ſo ſtrict a rule, would occaſion great
" ſcandal to their doings; for as much as it
" ſtood in the face of the world, infinite con-
" courſe coming from all parts to that populous
" city; and therefore deſired it might be altered
" to ſome other uſe. And laſtly, I find, that un-
" der the like pretence of robbing the church,
" wherewith the aforeſaid abbot of Fountaines
" was charged, the abbot of Glaſtenbury with
" two of his monks being condemned to death,
" was drawn from Wells upon a hurdle, then
" hanged upon the hill called the Tor near Glaſ-

" tenbury, his head ſet upon the abbey gate, and " his quarters diſpoſed of to Wells, Bath, Ilcheſ- " ter and Bridgwater. Nor did the abbots of " Colcheſter and Reading fare much better, as " they that will conſult the ſtory of that time " may ſee. And for farther terror to the reſt, " ſome priors and other eccleſiaſtical perſons, " who ſpoke againſt the king's ſupremacy, a " thing then ſomewhat uncooth, were condemned " as traitors and executed.

" And now when all this was effected, to the " end it might not be thought that theſe things " were done with a high hand, the king having " proteſted that he would ſuppreſs none without " the conſent of his parliament, (it being called " April 28, 1539, to confirm theſe ſurrenders " ſo made,) there wanted not plauſible inſinua- " tions to both houſes for drawing on their con- " ſent with all ſmoothneſs thereto; the nobility " being promiſed large ſhares in the ſpoil, either " by free gift from the king, eaſy purchaſes, or " moſt advantageous exchanges, and many of " the active gentry advancements to honours with " encreaſe of their eſtates; all which we ſee " happened to them accordingly. And the better " to ſatisfy the vulgar, it was repreſented to " them, that by this deluge of wealth the king- " dom ſhould be ſtrengthened with an army of " 40000 men, and that for the future they ſhould " never be charged with ſubſidies, fifteenths, " loans, or common aids. By which means the " parliament, ratifying the aboveſaid ſurrenders, " the work became compleated: for the more " firm ſettling whereof a ſudden courſe was taken " to pull down and deſtroy the buildings, as had " been done before upon the diſſolution of ſmaller " houſes, whereof I have touched. Next to diſ- " tribute a great proportion of their lands

" amongſt

" amongſt the nobility and gentry, as had been " projected; which was accordingly done: The " viſitor general having told the king, that the " more had intereſt in them, the more they would " be irrevocable.

" And leaſt any domeſtic ſtirs, by reaſon of " this great and ſtrange alteration ſhould ariſe, " rumours were ſpread abroad, that cardinal Pool " laboured with divers princes to procure forces " againſt this realm, and that an invaſion was " threatened; which ſeemed the more credible, " becauſe the truce concluded between the em- " peror and French king was generally known, " neither of them wanting a pretence to invade " England. And this was alſo ſeconded by a ſud- " den journey of the king unto the ſea-coaſts; " unto divers parts whereof he had ſent ſundry " of the nobles and expert perſons to viſit the " ports and places of danger, who failed not for " their diſcharge upon all events to affirm the " peril in each place to be ſo great, as one would " have thought every place needed a fortifica- " tion. Beſides he forthwith cauſed his navy to " be in readineſs, and muſters to be taken over " all the kingdom. All which preparations be- " ing made againſt a danger believed imminent, " ſeemed ſo to excuſe the ſuppreſſion of the ab- " beys, as that the people, willing to ſave their " own purſes, began to ſuffer it eaſily; eſpeci- " ally when they ſaw order taken for building ſuch " forts.

" But let us look a little upon the ſucceſs, " wherein I find that the viſitor general, the " grand actor of this tragical buſineſs, having " contracted upon himſelf ſuch an odium from " the nobility, by reaſon of his low birth (though " not long before made knight of the garter, " earl of Eſſex, and lord high chancellor of Eng-

" land) as alſo from the Catholics for having " thus operated in the diſſolution of abbeys, that " (before the end of the aboveſaid parliament " wherein that was ratified, which he had with " ſo much induſtry brought to paſs) the king, " not having any more uſe of him, gave way to " his enemies accuſations, whereupon being ar- " reſted by the duke of Norfolk at the council " table, when he leaſt dreamt of it, and com- " mitted to the tower, he was condemned by " the ſame parliament for hereſy and treaſon, " unheard and little pitied; and on the 28th of " July, viz. four days after the parliament was " diſſolved, had his head cut off on Tower- " hill.

" And as for the fruit which the people reaped, " after all their hopes built upon thoſe ſpecious " pretences, which I have mentioned, it was " very little. For it is plain, that ſubſidies from " the clergy, and fifteenths of laymens' goods " were ſoon after exacted: And that in Edward " the VIth's time, the commons were conſtrained " to ſupply the king's wants by a new invention, " viz. ſheep, cloaths, goods, debts, &c. for three " years; which tax grew ſo heavy, that the year " following they prayed the king for a mitigation " thereof. Nor is it a little obſerveable, that " whilſt the monaſteries ſtood, there was no act " for the relief of the poor. So amply did thoſe " houſes give ſuccour to them that were in want, " whereas in the next age, viz. 39 Eliz. no leſs " than eleven bills were brought into the houſe of " commons for that purpoſe."

Thus far this learned knight; who has here diſcovered ſuch a complication of the blackeſt villainies, as ſuffice to ſtrike a Chriſtian's heart with horror. However, in confirmation of the truth of Sir William Dugdale's relation, I will here

here add a piece taken from Mr. Thomas Hearn's preliminary obſervations upon Mr. Brown Willis's view of the mitred abbeys. This author, after a ſolemn profeſſion of his being a ſincere member of the church of England, writes thus:

" Popery (as I take it, ſays he) ſignifies no more " than the errors of the church of Rome. Had " he (Henry VIII.) therefore put a ſtop to thoſe " errors, he had acted wiſely, and very much to " the content of all truly good and religious men. " But then this would not have ſatisfied the ends " of himſelf and his covetous and ambitious " agents. They all aimed at the revenues and " riches of the religious houſes; for which reaſon " no arts or contrivances were to be paſſed by, " that might be of uſe in obtaining theſe ends. " The moſt abominable crimes were to be charg- " ed upon the religious, and the charge was to be " managed with the utmoſt induſtry, boldneſs " and dexterity. This was a powerful argument " to draw an odium upon them, and to make " them diſreſpected and ridiculed by the gene- " rality of mankind. And yet after all, the proofs " were ſo inſufficient, that from what I have " been able to gather, I have not found any " direct one againſt even any ſingle monaſtery. " The ſins of one or two particular perſons do " not make a Sodom. Neither are violent and " forced confeſſions to be eſteemed as the true " reſults of any one's thoughts. When there- " fore even theſe artifices would not do, the laſt " expedient was put in execution, and that was " ejection by force; and to make theſe innocent " ſufferers the more content, penſions were ſet- " tled upon many, and ſuch penſions were in " ſome meaſure proportioned to their innocence. " Thus by degrees the religious houſes, and " the eſtates belonging to them being ſurrendered

" unto

" unto the king, he either ſold or gave them to " the lay-nobility and gentry, contrary to what " he had at firſt pretended; and ſo they have con- " tinued ever ſince, though not without viſible " effects of God's vengeance and diſpleaſure, " there having been direful anathemas and curſes " denounced by the founders upon ſuch as ſhould " preſume to alienate the lands, or do any other " voluntary injury to the religious houſes. I could " myſelf produce inſtances of the ſtrange and " unaccountable decay of ſome gentlemen in my " own time, though otherwiſe perſons of very " great piety and worth, who have been poſſeſſed " of abbey-lands: But this would be invidious " and offenſive, and therefore I ſhall only refer " thoſe that are deſirous of having inſtances laid " before them, to ſhew the diſmal conſequences " that have happened, to Sir Henry Spelman's " hiſtory of ſacrilege, publiſhed in 8vo. in the " year 1698."

This agrees in ſubſtance with Sir Wm. Dugdale's account of the vile artifices made uſe of by the viſitors, in compaſſing the diſſolution of monaſteries, and overthrows the principal argument inſiſted upon by ſeveral Proteſtant writers, ſuch as Fox, Burnet, and others of the ſame kidney; who, to palliate the infamy and ſcandal of thoſe unchriſtian proceedings, which they plainly ſaw would be an everlaſting diſhonour to the Engliſh reformation, pretend that the looſeneſs and irregularities of moſt religious houſes in thoſe days, juſtly drew upon them their deſtruction.

But who ſees not the foulneſs of this calumny; ſince we find in Sir Wm. Dugdale's relation the parliament itſelf declaring, that thanks be to God religion was well kept and obſerved in the greater houſes; which nevertheleſs ſoon followed the fate of the leſſer ones; and Mr. Hearn ſticks not to declare,

declare, that after a diligent enquiry into the records of thoſe times, he could not find a direct proof even againſt any one ſingle monaſtery of the crimes laid to their charge; though as he obſerves very juſtly, the charge was managed againſt them with the utmoſt induſtry, boldneſs, and dexterity. Nay Burnet himſelf, that unmerciful ſcourge of Papiſts, ſpeaking of the nunnery of Godſtow in Oxfordſhire, after having raked together all the dirt he could throw at monaſteries, could not but clear the virtuous ladies of that houſe. His words in his hiſtory of the reformation, Vol. 3. p. 238. are theſe: Though the viſitors interceded earneſtly for the nunnery of Godſtow, where there was great ſtrictneſs of life, and to which moſt of the gentlewomen of the country were ſent to be bred, ſo that the gentry of the country deſired the king would ſpare the houſe; yet all was ineffectual.

It was here that Dr. London was appointed viſitor; whoſe behaviour in executing his commiſſion was inſolent in the higheſt degree, and ſhewed he was a fit tool for the work he was entruſted with. This vile wretch was afterwards convicted of perjury, and condemned to ride with his face to the horſe's tail at Windſor and Ockingham, with papers about his head declaring his crime.

SECT. 6.

A farther Account of the Effects of KING HENRY'S REFORMATION.

G. SIR, the relation you have entertained me with, is aſtoniſhing beyond what I am able to expreſs. For in reality the frightful ſcene it has ſet before me, looks more like an irruption of Barbarians pillaging and deſtroying all before them with

with fire and ſword, than a canonical viſitation appointed by the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical authority of a Chriſtian kingdom.

P. Your idea, Sir, agrees exactly with that of Sir Wm. Davenant in the following elegant verſes:

Who ſees theſe diſmal heaps, but will demand,
What barbarous invader ſack'd the land!
But when he hears no Goth, no Turk did bring
This deſolation, but a Chriſtian king;
When nothing but the name of zeal appears
'Twixt our beſt actions, and the worſt of theirs,
What does he think our ſacrilege would ſpare,
Since theſe th' effects of our devotions are.

G. And do Proteſtants call this a godly reformation?

P. Every thing was carried on under that religious maſk. Plundering the church, deſtroying the nurſeries of piety and learning, demoliſhing the noble monuments of the religious generoſity of their anceſtors, violating the wills of the dead, and robbing the living of their lawful poſſeſſions: In a word, forcing innumerable perſons of both ſexes, that had conſecrated themſelves to God by ſolemn vows, out of their ſolitary cells to wander up and down in the wide world, and either beg their bread, or engage themſelves in courſes wholly unbecoming their ſtate: All theſe unchriſtian proceedings have ever ſince paſſed currently under the ſpecious name of zeal for a thorough godly reformation, and were the firſt fruits of it.

But as there were ſome at leaſt, whoſe conſcience would not permit them either to renounce or diſſemble their ancient faith, of which the belief of the pope's ſupremacy in ſpirituals had always been regarded as a capital point, theſe ſoon felt the utmoſt

utmoſt rigour of king Henry's law, which made it high treaſon to refuſe the oath of ſupremacy, or ackowledge the biſhop of Rome ſupreme head of the univerſal church. So that a large effuſion of innocent blood became a neceſſary conſequence of this godly reformation, which being built upon the king's ſupremacy as it's main foundation, would not have ſtood upon a firm bottom, if the oppoſers of it had been tolerated to follow the dictates of their conſcience without ſuffering for it.

Dr. John Fiſher, biſhop of Rocheſter, acknowledged by all Proteſtants to have been a learned and holy prelate, appeared at the head of theſe champions, who had the courage to lay down their lives in defence of the ancient faith. Dr. Heylin reckons thirteen abbots and priors, and about ſeventy-ſeven monks and other religious perſons, beſides a great number of the laity, who all ſuffered death as in caſes of high treaſon for the ſame cauſe. One of theſe was Sir Thomas More, who had been chancellor of England, and behaved himſelf in that high ſtation with ſo much integrity and diſintereſtedneſs, that when by a voluntary reſignation he returned to a private life, he had not in the leaſt improved his fortune. A rare example! but this great man had a heart above this world; the riches and honours whereof he deſpiſed as much, as they are uſually coveted by others.

My lord Herbert relates of him, that finding his lady and daughters, when they were acquainted that he had reſigned his place, in a very great concern about it by reaſon of the narrowneſs of their circumſtances, he ſpoke thus to them: We will begin with the ſlender diet of the ſtudents of the law, and if that will not hold out, we will take ſuch commons as they have at Oxford; which yet if our purſes will not ſtretch to maintain, our laſt refuge

refuge will be to go a begging, and at every man's door ſing together a *Salve regina* to get alms. p. 372. This though a trivial paſſage in the life of ſo eminent a perſon, gives us a clearer idea than the moſt memorable actions of the true character of the man; and ſhews that one, who deſpiſed even the ordinary conveniencies of life, was above the temptation of turning trimmer in religion upon any worldly conſiderations, or damning his ſoul to ſave his life. And ſo it is no wonder, that when he was called upon by the king's officers, he walked out of the tower, where he had been kept priſoner for above a twelve-month, to the ſcaffold ſet up for him, as unconcerned, nay with as much chearfulneſs, as if he had been going to take the air; and laid down his head upon the block with the ſame repoſe of mind, as he uſed to lay it down upon his pillow to take his natural reſt. The ſame lord Herbet gives the following account of his death:

"This great perſon, going ſhortly after to the "place of execution, met among many friends "only one enemy, who openly reviled him for "a ſentence heretofore given in chancery; to "which he made no anſwer, but that if it were "to do, he would do it again. And now being "reſolved to die, he returned to his wonted face-"tiouſneſs. Therefore being to go up the ſcaf-"fold, he ſaid to one, friend help me up, and "when I go down again let me ſhift for myſelf as "I can. Being now mounted, the executioner, "as the cuſtom is, aſked him forgiveneſs, which "he granted, but told him withal, he would get "no credit in cutting off his head, his neck was "ſo ſhort. Then laying down his head upon the "block, bid the executioner ſtay till he had laid "aſide his beard. For, (ſaid he) it never commit-"ted treaſon. After which, coming to ſome pri-

"vate

" vate devotions he received his death. Thus " ended Sir Thomas More, with ſo little conſter- " nation, that even terrors of death could not " take off the pleaſure he had in his conceited and " merry language; which many attributed to his " innocence, p. 422.

G. I do not ſee, how it could poſſibly be attributed to any other cauſe. For a man muſt either be wholly deſtitute of all ſenſe of religion, or have a very clear conſcience to look death in the face with an intrepid mind. Now ſince it is unqueſtionable, that Sir Thomas More was the very reverſe of the former, nothing but the inward teſtimony of a clear conſcience could render him proof againſt the uſual terrors of death.

P. But innocence and virtue, though they took away the ſting of death, were no protection againſt the unbridled paſſions of an arbitrary prince, enraged to ſee himſelf openly condemned by the reſolute oppoſition of a perſon univerſally eſteemed both for his piety and learning. And in reality one ſingle perſon of Sir Thomas More's, or biſhop Fiſher's unſpotted character, gives a greater reputation to a cauſe wherein conſcience and religion are concerned, and is a more ſolid proof of the juſtice of it, than a thouſand temporizing mercenary ſouls, whoſe actions appear manifeſtly to be the fruit of their intereſted hopes and fears.

G. But pray, Sir, after the univerſal plunder of abbeys and monaſteries, what became of the biſhopricks? Did not their rich lands and manors ſtand likewiſe in need of a thorough godly reformation?

P. You ſhall hear what Dr. Heylin ſays of it in his hiſtory of the Engliſh reformation.

" Moſt true it is, that it was ſomething of the " lateſt before king Henry caſt his eye on the " lands of biſhopricks; though there were ſome,

" who

" who thought the time long till they fell upon " them. Concerning which there goes a ſtory, " that after the court-harpies had devoured the " greateſt part of the ſpoil, which came by the " ſuppreſſion of abbeys, they began to ſeek ſome " other way to ſatiate that greedy appetite, " which the diviſion of the former booty had left " unſatisfied; and for the ſatisfying whereof they " found not any thing ſo neceſſary as the biſhops " lands.

" This to effect Sir Thomas Seymour is em- " ployed as the fitteſt man, being in favour with " the king, and brother to queen Jane his moſt be- " loved and beſt wife; and having opportunity of " acceſs unto him, as being one of his privy cham- " ber; and he not having any good affection to " archbiſhop Cranmer, deſired that the experi- " ment would be tried on him. And therefore " took his time to inform the king, that my " lord of Canterbury did nothing but fell his " woods, letting long leaſes for great fines, and " making havock of the royalties of his arch- " biſhoprick to raiſe thereby a fortune for his " wife and children. Withal he acquainted the " king, that the archbiſhop kept no hoſpitality " in reſpect of ſuch a large revenue; and that " in the opinion of many wiſe men, it were more " convenient for the biſhops to have a ſufficient " yearly ſtipend out of the exchequer, than to be " ſo encumbered with temporal royalties; being " ſo great a hindrance to their ſtudies and paſtoral " charge. And that the lands and royalties being " taken to his majeſty's uſe would afford him, be- " ſides the ſaid annual ſtipends, a great yearly " revenue.

" The king conſidering of it, could not think " fit, that ſuch a plauſible propoſition, as taking " to himſelf the lands of the biſhops ſhould be

" made

" made in vain, only he was reſolved to prey " farther off, and not to fall upon the ſpoil too " near the court, for fear of having more par- " takers in the booty than might ſtand with his " profit. And to this end he deals with Holgate, " preferred not long before from Landaff to the " ſee of York; from whom he takes at one time " no fewer than ſeventy manors and townſhips " of good old rent, giving him in exchange to " the like yearly value certain impropriations, " penſions, tithes and portions of tithes; but all " of an extended rent, which had accrued to the " crown by the fall of abbeys.

" He diſmembered alſo by theſe arts certain " manors from the ſee of London, and others " in like manner from the ſee of Canterbury; " but not without ſome reaſonable compenſation " for them. And although, by reaſon of his " death, which followed ſoon after, there was no " farther alienation made in his time of the " church's patrimony, yet having opened ſuch a " gap, and diſcovered this ſecret, that the ſacred " patrimony might be alienated with ſo little " trouble, the courtiers of king Edward's time " would not be kept from breaking violently into " it, and making up their own fortunes in the " ſpoil of biſhopricks. So impoſſible a thing it " is for the ill example of princes not to find fol- " lowers in all ages, eſpecially where profit and " preferment may be furthered by it."

SECT. 7.

The REFORMATION carried on in the Reign of EDWARD VI. and the true Motives of it.

I Have now done with king Henry's reign, whom a merry Proteſtant writer ſtiles the poſtilion of the reformation. I preſume this author thought fit

fit to allot him ſo mean a poſt, in puniſhment of his not carrying on the reformation any thing conſiderably farther than the bare diſcarding of the pope. For after he had done that uſeful piece of ſervice, and opened ſo wide a gap for a thorough godly reformation, it was expected by moſt, that he would have proceeded farther. But he diſappointed their expectation, and continued in moſt things a zealous Papiſt to the very laſt. Nay, he took care before his death to leave his young ſucceſſor, Edward VI. in the hands of ſuch perſons as he had reaſon to think were cordially affected to the ſix famous articles publiſhed by him in defence of the ancient faith, ſince they had all made public profeſſion of them during his life. But as ſoon as he was dead, they wiſely remembring the old proverb, that a dead dog cannot bite, the terrible Henry, who a little before had made them all tremble with a frown, was no more regarded than the meaneſt of thoſe he had ſent before him to the other world; and his will, which till then had been arbitrary, was laid aſide like an old coat worn thread bare.

The truth of the matter is, that as long as king Henry lived, none could hope for any ſhare either in his favour, or the plunder of religious houſes, without conforming at leaſt in outward appearance to the religion himſelf profeſſed. Nay, he was ſuch a perſecutor of non-conformiſts, that all convicted Lutherans or Zuinglians were ſure to be puniſhed with death. In ſo much that king Henry's laſt queen was herſelf in imminent danger of loſing her head upon a bare ſuſpicion of being addicted to Lutheriſm. But after his death there appeared immediately a new ſcene, and a change of religion was reſolved upon as a neceſſary expedient to ſerve the ends of thoſe court-harpies, who were ſtill gaping after more booty.

G. It ſeems religion ſat as looſe upon thoſe gentlemen as their cloaks, which they could throw off or put on as they found convenient; and ſerved much for the ſame uſe, either to keep them warm, or cover them againſt foul weather. But who were the chief promoters and managers of this affair? And what part did the young king act in it?

P. As to the king, he is but juſt of an age to begin to learn his catechiſm. So you may eaſily gueſs he had his leſſon taught him. Yet to the ſhame of the reformation, he was ſolemnly declared ſupreme head of the church of England in ſpirituals; that is, ſupreme head of controverſies in religion, and the ſource of all eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction in the realm. In ſo much, that in the firſt year of his reign there paſſed an act entitled, an act for the election of biſhops, and what ſeals and ſtiles ſhall be uſed by ſpiritual perſons, &c. Concerning which act Dr. Heylin writes thus, p. 51:

"In the compoſing of this act (ſays he) there "was more danger couched than at firſt appeared. "By the laſt branch thereof it was plain and evi- "dent, that the intent of the contrivers was, by "degrees, to weaken the authority of the epiſco- "pal order, by forcing them from their ſtrong "hold of divine inſtitution, and making them "no other than the king's miniſters only, or his "eccleſiaſtical ſheriffs (as a man might ſay) to "execute his will, and diſperſe his mandates. "And of this act ſuch uſe was made, that the "biſhops of thoſe times were not in a capacity "of conferring orders, but as they were there- "unto impowered by a ſpecial licence. The "tenor whereof, if Sanders may be believed, was "in theſe words, to wit: The king, to ſuch or "ſuch a biſhop, greeting; whereas all and all "manner of juriſdiction, as well eccleſiaſtical as "civil,

" civil, flows from the king as from the ſupreme " head of all the body, &c. We therefore give " and grant to you full power and licence (to con- " tinue during our good pleaſure) of conferring or- " ders within your dioceſe, and promoting fit per- " ſons unto holy orders, even to that of prieſthood."

A moſt noble church! wherein biſhops were obliged to receive their powers or faculties for the exerciſing of their eccleſiaſtical functions from a child! but was it ſo in the days of old? Was it according to the inſtitution of Chriſt? However in confirmation of this fact, which indeed appears incredible in itſelf, I ſhall quote a paſſage from Mr. Collier, in his 2d. Part, 3d. Book. p. 169. wherein he rectifies a miſtake touching this matter of biſhop Burnet, whom he always compliments with the title of our learned church-hiſtorian; I wiſh he could with as much juſtice have given him the titles of true and impartial, which are as neceſſary qualifications as learning to make a good hiſtorian. The paſſage is ſomewhat long, but very much to the purpoſe:

" Our learned church-hiſtorian, (ſays he) ob- " ſerves, this biſhop [meaning biſhop Bonner, whom he had ſpoke of juſt before] " took a " ſtrange commiſſion from the king. Whether the " other biſhops, continues this author, took ſuch " commiſſions I know not, but am certain there is " none ſuch in Cranmer's regiſter——After Bon- " ner, had taken this commiſſion, he might well " have been called one of the king's biſhops." Theſe are Burnet's words quoted by M. Collier; who goes on thus:

" As this learned hiſtorian obſerves, the con- " tents of Bonner's commiſſion were extraordi- " nary; for it begins thus: That the king is " the fountain of all manner of juriſdiction and " authority, as well eccleſiaſtical as ſecular; and " that

" that thoſe who formerly exerciſed this juriſdic-
" tion, did it not only in a precarious manner, and
" upon royal courteſy, and that therefore it ought
" to be returned, whenever his majeſty ſhall pleaſe
" to call for it. And that ſince the lord Cromwell
" knight of the garter, vicegerent and vicar-ge-
" neral to preſide, manage, and direct in all ec-
" cleſiaſtical cauſes, was ſo far employed in mat-
" ters of ſtate, that he was not at leiſure to diſcharge
" the functions of a vicegerent, and manage the
" eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction wholly delegated to him
" by the king, ſupreme head of the church of
" England, &c.

" Becauſe Cromwell was too buſy, and could
" not be every-where, nor execute the office of
" an univerſal ſuperintendent; for this reaſon,
" as the inſtrument continues, the king gives Bon-
" ner a commiſſion to execute all the branches of
" the epiſcopal authority under his highneſs. For
" the purpoſe, he has a royal licence to ordain
" within the dioceſe of London; to viſit the dean
" and chapter of St. Paul's, and all other colleges,
" hoſpitals, monaſteries, clergy and laity, within
" his diſtrict. He has likewiſe a power given him
" to hear cauſes, and to give ſentence in the ſpi-
" ritual courts; to exerciſe diſcipline, and in-
" flict cenſures according to the directions of the
" law, and the degrees of the criminals offences;
" and, in ſhort, to execute every thing be-
" longing to the authority and juriſdiction of a
" biſhop.

" And after the king had thus declared himſelf
" patriarch in his dominions, claimed all man-
" ner of ſpiritual authority, and pronounced the
" biſhops no more than his delegates at plea-
" ſure: After this theſe words are thrown into
" the commiſſion to give it the more paſſable
" complexion, beſides thoſe things, which are
" known

" known from holy ſcriptures to belong to you by " divine right.

" Now, with ſubmiſſion, this clauſe ſeems to " come in too late, and is utterly inconſiſtent with " the former part of the commiſſion. For if the " king is the fountain of all manner of eccle- " ſiaſtical juriſdiction; if his lay-vicegerent might " lawfully ſupply the room of all the biſhops in " England, provided he were at leiſure, and able " to do it in perſon; if the biſhops in the execu- " tion of their office are only the king's repre- " ſentatives, and revocable at pleaſure; if theſe " affirmations are all defenſible, as the commiſſion " ſets forth, then without queſtion the hierarchy " can have no juriſdiction aſſigned in the new " Teſtament, nor any authority derived from our " Saviour.

" But if the church is a diſtinct and entire ſo- " ciety; if in pure ſpirituals ſhe is conſtituted in- " dependent on all the kings on the earth; if ſhe " is furniſhed with powers ſufficient to anſwer " the ends of her charter; if theſe powers were " ſettled by our Saviour upon the apoſtles and " their ſucceſſors to the world's end; if the " hierarchy can make out this title, then I muſt " crave leave to think, thoſe who ſuggeſted the " draught of this inſtrument were no great di- " vines.

" But how extraordinary ſoever this commiſ- " ſion may ſeem, it was certainly complied with, " and that by other biſhops beſides Bonner. For " the purpoſe, Cranmer took out one of the ſame " tenor and form from king Edward VI. Now " if Bonner was ſo much to blame for complying " to this latitude, the ſame imputation muſt fall " upon Cranmer. To which we may add, that " this was not the firſt commiſſion of this kind " taken out by Cranmer. For, as our hiſtorian " obſerves,

" obſerves, the order of council made in the be-
" ginning of the reign of king Edward VI. re-
" quires the biſhops to take out new commiſſions
" of the ſame form with thoſe they had taken out
" in king Henry's time; only with this difference,
" that there is no mention made of a vicar gene-
" ral in theſe commiſſions, there being none after
" Cromwell advanced to that dignity. If no ſuch
" commiſſion, as this learned gentleman remarks,
" taken by Cranmer from king Henry, be found
" in his regiſter, it does not follow he took out
" no ſuch inſtrument; for his regiſter is imper-
" fect in many places. To ſpeak clearly, he
" took out ſuch a commiſſion from king Henry
" ſome years before Bonner. For, from the col-
" lections of Dr. Yale, the learned Harmer cites
" a tranſcript of this commiſſion, agreeing ex-
" actly with that of Bonner abovementioned, to
" which this note is ſubjoined, *tales licentias acce-*
" *perunt Thomas archiepiſcopus Cantuarienſis menſe*
" *Octobri*, 1535. *Edvardus archiep. eborac. Jo-*
" *annes epiſc. Lincoln.* 13 *Octob.* 1535, &c. Now
" this Dr. Yale being an eminent advocate in
" Doctors Commons in Cranmer's time, and af-
" terwards principal regiſtrary and vicar general
" to archbiſhop Parker, muſt be owned an un-
" exceptionable evidence for this point. Farther
" our learned hiſtorian has miſreported Bonner,
" in ſaying, he was one of the Popiſh party at
" this time, and took out his commiſſion to ſerve
" that intereſt. For Fox has given ſeveral in-
" ſtances to prove, that Bonner, till the fall of
" Cromwell, was a zealous promoter of the re-
" formation, which is likewiſe afterwards confeſſed
" by our hiſtorian."

Thus the learned Mr. Collier; who had indeed a much juſter claim to that title, than the author he beſtows it ſo liberally upon; unleſs num-

berleſs groſs miſtakes, or, what is worſe, wilful falſhoods are a mark of learning. But be that as it will, the piece I have quoted juſtifies the ſharpeſt reflections upon Cranmer's memory, that ſecond Athanaſius as biſhop Burnet calls him, who not only had the meanneſs to bend his neck under the moſt diſhonourable yoke that ever was laid upon perſons of his ſacred character, but by his baſe flatteries of the worſt of princes, was himſelf the moſt buſy and active in preparing it both for himſelf and his fellow-biſhops.

Now therefore to anſwer your queſtion, who were the chief promoters of that great eccleſiaſtical revolution, which happened in the reign of Edward VI? They were of two different ſorts; for the greateſt part of them were but mere tools, ſet at work like day-labourers by the great men at court to do the drudging part for them; and theſe, though moſt of them had alſo their private views, were never let into the ſecret myſtery of the reforming trade, leſt there ſhould have been too many ſharers in the profit of it, which they, who were at the helm, and had the chief management and ſuperintendency of the whole buſineſs, deſigned to engroſs moſtly to themſelves.

At the head of theſe was a no leſs man than the duke of Somerſet, the young king's uncle, declared lord protector during his minority; who having thus got the reins of government put into his hands, drove on the reformation with ſuch violence, that, ſaving only ſome fundamentals, he ſtopped not till he had overturned the whole edifice of the ancient church of England, ſo as ſcarce to leave one ſtone upon another of it's former ſtructure.

G. But I do not well apprehend the meaning of what you ſaid juſt now, viz. than an entire change of religion was reſolved as a neceſſary expedient to ſerve

ſerve the ends of thoſe, who were ſtill gaping after more booty. For could they not have plundered the church without disjointing the whole frame of its ancient faith?

P. No, they could not have done it with any plauſible colour. For if the ancient faith had been kept up, they would not have had the leaſt pretence to lay their ſacrilegious hands on the rich ſpoils, which came in flowing to them of courſe upon the innovations they made in that faith.

Let us hear Dr. Heylin ſpeak of the motives, which ſpurred on their zeal to theſe aſtoniſhing innovations. This author, in the preface to his hiſtory of the reformation, after a ſhort account of king Henry's throwing off the pope's authority, touches briefly upon what paſſed in the reign of his ſon Edward VI. Some great men, ſays he, about the court, under colour of removing ſuch corruptions as remained in the church, had caſt their eyes upon the ſpoil of ſhrines and images, and the improving of their own fortunes by the chantery-lands; all which they moſt ſacrilegiouſly divided among themſelves.

Then ſpeaking of a propoſal ſtarted by ſome of the Zuinglian party to pull down altars, he goes on thus:

" The touching on this ſtring made excellent " muſick to moſt of the grandees of the court; " who had before caſt many an envious eye on " the coſtly hangings, that maſſy plate and other " rich and precious utenſils, which adorned theſe " altars——Beſides there was no ſmall ſpoil to " be made of copes; ſome of them being made " of cloth of tiſſue, of cloth of gold and ſilver, " or imbroidered velvet. And might not theſe be " handſomely converted to private uſes, to ſerve

" as carpets for their tables, coverlets to their beds,
" or cuſhions to their chairs or windows?

" Hereupon ſome rude people are encouraged
" under-hand to beat down ſome altars; which
" makes way for an order of the council-table
" to take down all the reſt, and ſet up tables in
" their places; followed by a commiſſion to be
" executed in all parts of the kingdom for ſeiz-
" ing of the premiſes for the uſe of the king.
" But as the grandees of the court intended to
" defraud the king of ſo great a booty, and the
" commiſſioners to put a cheat upon the court-
" lords, who employed them in it; ſo they were
" both prevented in ſome places by the lords and
" gentry, who thought the altar-cloths, together
" with the copes and plate of ſeveral churches,
" to be as neceſſary for themſelves as for others.
" Pref."

G. Yes, indeed, they were in the right to come in for ſnacks, if the old proverb be true, that to cheat a cheat is no fraud. But what a deal of ſacrilegious roguery have we here, and all covered with the religious maſk of a godly reformation! but did not the grandees of the court reſent their being thus chowſed by their inferiors?

P. This queſtion is anſwered by Dr. Heylin upon another occaſion of the like nature, where he writes thus: All which enormities were connived at by the lords and others, becauſe they could not queſtion thoſe, who had ſo miſerably invaded the church's patrimony, without condemning themſelves. p. 69.

But to return to the ſubject we were upon, to wit, the motives for puſhing on the pretended reformation, the ſame author writes in the following manner:

" The parliament (ſays he) met on the fourth
" of November; in which the cards were ſo well
" packed,

" packed, that there was no need of any other " ſhuffling to the end of the game; becauſe they " all agreed well enough in one common princi- " ple, which was to ſerve the preſent time—— " For though a great part of the nobility, and not " a few of the chief gentry in the houſe of com- " mons were cordially affected to the church of " Rome, yet were they willing to give way to all " ſuch acts and ſtatutes, as were made againſt it, " out of a fear of loſing ſuch church-lands, as " they were poſſeſſed of, if that religion ſhould " prevail, and get up again. And for the reſt, " who either came to make or improve their for- " tunes, there is no queſtion to be made, but " they came to further ſuch a reformation, as " ſhould moſt viſibly conduce to the advancement " of their ſeveral ends; which appears plainly by " the ſtrange mixture of the acts and reſults " thereof——Some tending to the preſent benefit, " and enriching of particular perſons, and ſome " again being deviſed on purpoſe to prepare a way " for expoſing the revenues of the church to ſpoil " and rapine, p. 47, 48."

G. I perceive religion was made uſe of by theſe reforming gentlemen no otherwiſe than as a ſtalking-horſe to ſecure their game. For though ſome amongſt them differed in their opinions about religion, they all agreed in one common principle of getting all they could and loſing nothing by it. Even they, who in their hearts were convinced of the truth of the ancient faith, gave their votes in parliament for all ſuch acts, as were againſt it. And why ſo? For fear of loſing what they had already got, in caſe Popery ſhould get the upper hand again, as it had formerly. But others it ſeems were zealous for ſuch a reformation, as would bring ſtill

more griſt to their mills. And who cannot but admire the religious purity of their intentions?

P. One of the acts that paſſed in this parliament, was for the retrieving of a ſtatute made in the 27th of Henry VIII. by which chanteries, colleges, free-chapels, &c. were granted to the king. But he died before he had taken many of them into his poſſeſſion. And the grandees of the court not being willing to loſe ſo great a booty, theſe, together with all manors, lands, tenements, rents, tithes, penſions, portions, and other hereditaments, were again given to the king, his heirs and ſucceſſors for ever; there being ninety colleges within the compaſs of that grant, and no fewer than 2374 free-chapels and chanteries. Heylin, p. 50, 51.

G. But pray, Sir, what were thoſe chanteries, and free-chapels, which were given to the king?

" P. The chanteries, (ſays Dr. Heylin, p. 51) " conſiſted of ſalaries to one or more prieſts, to " ſay Maſs daily for the ſouls of their deceaſed " founders and their friends: which not ſubſiſting " of themſelves were generally incorporated, and " united to ſome parochial, collegiate, or cathe- " dral church. No fewer than forty ſeven be- " ing founded in St. Paul's free-chapels; which " though ordained for the ſame intent with others, " yet were independent, of ſtronger conſtitution, " and richer endowment. Though therein they " fell ſhort of the colleges, which exceeded them " both in the beauty of their buildings, the " number of their prieſts maintained by them, " and the proportion of revenue allotted to " them."

SECT.

SECT. 8.

The ſame SUBJECT continued.

WHAT I have hitherto related was all done in the firſt year of king Edward's reign, viz. Anno 1547. In the year following, Feb. 11th, an order was ſent from the privy-council to all biſhops for pulling down all images. And it may well be thought (ſays Dr. Heylin, p. 56.) that covetouſneſs ſpurred on this buſineſs more than zeal; there being none of the images ſo poor and mean, the ſpoil whereof would not afford ſome gold or ſilver, if not jewels alſo; beſides cenſers, candleſticks, and many other rich utenſils appertaining to them.

"The ſame year, in the beginning of March, "commiſſioners were diſpatched throughout the "realm to take a ſurvey of colleges, free-cha- "pels, chanteries, &c. by which it would be "found no difficult matter to know how to parcel "out, proportion, and divide the ſpoil between "all ſuch, as had in hopes before devoured "it.

"In the firſt place, as lying neareſt, came in "the free-chapel of St. Stephen in Weſtminſter, "and reckoned for the chapel-royal of the court "of England. The whole foundation conſiſted "of no fewer than thirty-eight perſons, to wit, a "dean, twelve canons, fourteen vicars, four clerks, "ſix choriſters, beſides a verger, and one that had "the charge of the chapel——As for the cha- "pel itſelf, together with the cloyſter of curious "workmanſhip, they are ſtill ſtanding as they "were; the chapel having been ſince fitted and "employed for a houſe of commons in all times of "parliament.

" At the ſame time alſo fell the college of St. " Martin ſituated in the city of London, not far " from Alderſgate; firſt founded for a dean and " ſecular canons in the time of the conqueror. " This college was ſurrendered into the hands of " Edward VI. who gave it to the abbey of Weſt- " minſter; and they, to make the beſt of the " king's donation, ordered that the body of the " church, with the choir and iſles, ſhould be leaſed " out for fifty years; excepting out of the ſame " grant, the bells, lead, ſtone, timber, glaſs " and iron, to be ſold and diſpoſed of for the " ſole uſe and benefit of the ſaid dean and chap- " ter. Which foul tranſaction being made, " the church was totally pulled down, and " a tavern built on the eaſt part of it. The " reſt of the ſituation of the ſame church and " college, together with the whole precinct " thereof, being built upon with ſeveral tene- " ments.

" But for this ſacrilege the church of Weſtmin- " ſter was called immediately to a ſober reckoning. " For the lord protector caſt a longing eye upon " the goodly patrimony, which belonged unto it; " and being unfurniſhed of a palace, he doubted " not to find room enough upon the diſſolution " and deſtruction of ſo large a fabric, to raiſe a " palace equal to his vaſt deſigns. Which coming " to the ear of Benſon the laſt abbot and firſt dean " of that church, he could think of no better " means to preſerve the whole, than by parting " for the preſent with more than half the eſtate, " that belonged to it, p. 60, 61."

I will now mention a piece of ſacrilegious plun- der, which indeed was ſcandalous in the higheſt degree.

The protector having been bought off by Benſon from his purpoſe of building on the deanery and cloſe

cloſe of Weſtminſter, " had caſt his eye (ſays Dr. Heylin) " upon a piece of ground in the ſtrand; " on which ſtood three epiſcopal houſes and one " pariſh church. The pariſh church was dedi- " cated to the Virgin Mary, the houſes belonged " to the biſhops of Worceſter, Litchfield, and " Landaff. All theſe he takes into his hands, the " owners not daring to oppoſe him. Having " cleared the place but ſtill wanting materials, he " thereupon reſolves to take down the pariſh- " church of St. Margaret's in Weſtminſter. But " the workmen had no ſooner advanced their " ſcaffolds, when the pariſhoners gathered toge- " ther in great multitudes with bows and arrows, " ſtaves and clubs, and other weapons. Which " ſo terrified the workmen, that they ran away in " great amazement, and never could be brought " again upon that employment. Upon this he " employs workmen to take down the cloyſter of " St. Paul's on the north-ſide of the church en- " vironing a large parcel of ground, called Par- " don-church-yard, and beautified with a moſt " curious piece of workmanſhip called the dance " of death, together with a fair charnel-houſe " and a chapel, and leaves the bones of the dead " bodies to be buried in the fields in unhallowed " ground. But all this not ſufficing to complete " the work, the ſteeple and moſt part of the church " St. John's of Jeruſalem not far from Smithfield, " moſt beautifully built, was blown up with gun- " powder, and all the ſtone employed for that " purpoſe. Such was the ground, and ſuch the " materials of the duke's new palace, called So- " merſethouſe. p. 73."

According to this beginning, ſays Dr. Heylin, all the year, viz. 1549 proceeds. But this great reformer and plunderer of the Engliſh church did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of theſe enor-

mous ſacrileges, God's juſtice purſuing him cloſe at the heels. For after having put his own brother to death, and being thereby deprived of ſo great a ſupport, and laid open to the proſecutions of his enemies, he loſt his head not long after on a ſcaffold. The palace is yet ſtanding, and bears his name to ſerve, as a laſting monument of the ſacrilegious rapacity of that capital reformer of religion in the reign of Edward VI. But it affords the moſt melancholy reflections as to the ſtate of his ſoul. For I never read either of any repentance he ever ſhewed, or any reparation he ever made for the ſcandalous rapines he had both committed himſelf, and enouraged in others. He was ſucceeded in the protectorſhip by his capital enemy the duke of Northumberland, who walking in the footſteps of his predeceſſor, and imitating him in all his crimes, came ſoon after to the ſame untimely end. Only with this difference, that at his death (for which he had been prepared in priſon by Dr. Heath biſhop of Worceſter) he profeſſed himſelf a Roman Catholic, and declared, as Dr. Heylin relates, that being blinded with ambition, he had been contented to make wreck of his conſcience by temporizing: for which he profeſſed himſelf ſincerely penitent, and ſo acknowledged the juſtice of his death.

Stow relates, that after having made a public profeſſion of his faith upon the ſcaffold, he added the following words: And here I do proteſt to you unfeignedly, even from the bottom of my heart, that this which I have ſpoken is of myſelf, and not moved thereto by any man; nor for any flattery or hope of life. And of this I take to witneſs my lord of Worceſter, my old friend and ghoſtly father, that he found me in this mind and opinion when he came to me.

G. I preſume the ſubſtance of the fact being thus atteſted, cannot admit of any reaſonable doubt.

P. I do not know that any body ever doubted of it. However ſome Proteſtants have queſtioned the duke's ſincerity; and attributed his profeſſion of the Catholic faith to the hopes he had of obtaining thereby queen Mary's pardon; juſt as the ſame motive induced archbiſhop Cranmer to renounce Lutheraniſm, whilſt he was under ſentence of condemnation.

G. But ſince we can only judge by outward appearances, and all theſe give teſtimony for the duke's ſincerity, there is no poſitive reaſon to ſuſpect it. Which renders his caſe very different from that of archbiſhop Cranmer; whom though he abjured Lutheraniſm twice before his death, retracted his double abjuration, when he was at the ſtake. Whereas the duke of Northumberland confirmed upon the ſcaffold the abjuration he had made in priſon.

P. Sir, your reflection is very juſt. I will now add one paſſage more of Dr. Heylin, relating to the rapines committed in the laſt year of king Edward's reign; concerning which he writes thus:

"Such was the rapacity of the times, and "the unfortunateneſs of the king's condition, "that his minority was abuſed to many acts of "ſpoil and rapine, even to the higheſt degree of "ſacrilege, to the raiſing of ſome and enriching "of others, without any manner of improve-"ment to his own eſtate. For notwithſtanding "the great and almoſt ineſtimable treaſures, "which muſt needs come in by the ſpoil of ſo "many ſhrines and images, the ſale of the lands "belonging to chanteries, colleges, free-chapels, "&c. and the dilapidating of the patrimony of "ſo many biſhopricks and cathedral churches, he "was nevertheleſs not only plunged in debt, but

"the

" the crown-lands very much diminiſhed and " impaired ſince his coming to it.——It muſt " therefore be the king's care and endeavours of " thoſe, who plunged him into it, to find the " ſpeedieſt way for his getting out. In order to " which the main engine at this time for the ad- " vancing of money, was the ſpeeding a com- " miſſion into all parts of the realm, under pre- " tence of ſelling ſuch of the lands and the goods " of chanteries, &c. as remained unſold; but in " plain truth it was to ſeize upon all hangings, al- " tar-cloths fronts, parafronts, copes of all ſorts, " with all manner of plate, jewels, bells and " ornaments, which were to be found in any ca- " thedral or parochial church. To which rapa- " city the demoliſhing of the former altars—— " gave a very great hint by rendering all ſuch fur- " niture, rich plate and other coſtly utenſils in a " manner uſeleſs.——

" But notwithſtanding this great care of the " king on the one ſide, and the diligence of his " commiſſioners on the other, the booty did not " prove ſo great as they expected. In all great " fairs and markets there are ſome fore-ſtallers, " who get the beſt penny-worth to themſelves, " and ſuffer not the richeſt and moſt gainful " commodities to be openly ſold. And ſo it was " here. For there were ſome, who were as much " beforehand with the commiſſioners in embez- " zling the ſaid plate, jewels, and other furni- " ture, as the commiſſioners did intend to be " with the king in keeping always moſt part of " it to themſelves.——So that although ſome pro- " fit was hereby raiſed to the king's exchequer, " yet the far greateſt part of the prey came to " other hands. In ſo much that many private " men's parlours were hung with altar-cloths, " their tables and beds covered with copes inſtead

" of

" of carpets, and many made carowſing-cups of " the ſacred Chalices—as once Belthazzar cele- " brated his drunken feaſts, in the ſanctified veſ- " ſels of the Temple.

" It was a ſorry houſe, not worth the naming, " which had not ſomething of this furniture in " it; though it were only a fair large cuſhion " made of a Cope or Altar-cloth, to adorn their " windows, or to make their chairs appear to " have ſomething of a chair of ſtate. Yet how " contemptible were theſe trappings in compa- " riſon of thoſe vaſt ſums of money, which were " made of jewels, plate and cloath of tiſſue, either " conveyed beyond ſeas, or ſold at home, and " good land purchaſed with the money—nothing " more bleſſed to the poſterity of them that " bought them, for being purchaſed with the " conſecrated treaſures of ſo many churches, p. " 131, 132, &c."

G. Very fine, indeed! The young king is by his tutors put upon robbing the church—the commiſſioners appointed by him defraud the king—and the gentlemen of the county get the ſtart of the commiſſioners, and run away with a part of the booty. And could any thing be more canonical and regular than this! But I fear the Devil proved too cunning for them all in the winding up of the bottom, and was the principal gainer by this work, as well as a director and promoter of it. For I am ſure God could have no hand in it; unleſs we can ſuppoſe him to be an abbettor of ſacrilege and rapine: And you had reaſon to tell me, as you did juſt now, that if God was the author of ſuch a reformation, the enemy of man never had a part in any wickedneſs committed by mankind.

P. But pray, Sir, remember, that the facts I have related, how diſadvantageous ſoever to the Proteſtant

Proteſtant cauſe, are all faithfully collected from the writings of a zealous Proteſtant hiſtorian, who, we may be ſure, would not have tranſmitted them to poſterity, unleſs the force of uncontеſtable truth had obliged him to it. And indeed I never heard the truth of the abovesaid facts queſtioned by any.

But as the facts themſelves are unqueſtionable, ſo they unveil the whole ſecret myſtery of the pretended reformation, and leave no room to doubt of the true and real motives of it. For they ſhew manifeſtly, that an inſatiable avarice, or deſire of plundering the church, was the main ſpring that gave motion to every ſtep that was made towards it in the few years of king Edward's reign.

As for inſtance, the holy ſacrifice of the Maſs had been the public worſhip of the church of England for 900 years; and of the Britiſh church for 1300 years; becauſe her converſion to Chriſtianity under pope Eleutherius was 400 years earlier than that of the Saxons under pope Gregory. Now if the managers of the reformation had ſuffered the Maſs to be kept up, the unavoidable conſequence would have been, that altars (on which the ſacrifice of the Maſs is always offered) muſt likewiſe have been left ſtanding. And what a ſad ſtory would this have been to perſons, whoſe bowels were yearning for the jewels, the rich plate and furniture, which they could not poſſibly lay their hands on any other way, than by the deſtruction of the altars, to the ſervice whereof they had been conſecrated; nor was there any colourable pretence for the deſtruction of altars, unleſs the Maſs itſelf was firſt aboliſhed.

It is true, the venerable antiquity of this holy ſacrifice, which had been offered to God for ſo many ages in all the Chriſtian kingdoms upon earth, and in no place with greater zeal, than

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in the kingdom of Great Britain from the very infancy of it's converſion, pleaded hard for its preſervation: But the precious jewels, the maſſy plate, and coſtly furniture which adorned the altars on which it was offered, pleaded with a much more powerful eloquence for its utter abolition.

However the people were to be prepared for this monſtrous change of their ancient faith and worſhip: And thefore, as in all revolutions either of the church or ſtate, there never was wanting a ſet of mercenary preachers, ready to ſell their ſouls to perdition, for a valuable conſideration, the choiceſt of this character were diſpatched by the court into all parts of the kingdom, with inſtructions to preach down the Maſs, by repreſenting it to the people as an idolatrous worſhip, and contrary to the word of God: Becauſe when this point was once gained, the demolition of altars, which were rendered uſeleſs by it, as Dr. Heylin has obſerved, followed of courſe; and then the jewels, plate, and ornaments belonging to them, dropped of themſelves into the hands of thoſe who had contrived the whole buſineſs for that end: And ſo it is manifeſt that their real motive for aboliſhing the Maſs, was no other than to have a fair pretence to pull down altars, and by pulling down altars to rob the church of an immenſe treaſure, and fill their own coffers with it.

It was the ſame godly motive that inflamed their zeal againſt the honour which their forefathers had, in all preceding ages, ſince England's converſion, paid to the images and reliques of ſaints. Many of theſe reliques were kept in ſilver ſhrines, ſet with precious ſtones: And as to the images of Chriſt and his ſaints, Dr. Heylin has already told us, that none of them were ſo poor and mean, the ſpoil whereof could not afford ſome gold or ſilver, if not jewels alſo; beſides cenſers, candleſticks,

candleſticks, and many other rich utenſils appertaining to them. This doubtleſs was a very ſolid reaſon to the managers of the reformation to condemn all honour paid to images and reliques as an idolatrous worſhip. For was not that idolatry, nay abominable idolatry, which if left unreformed would have ſpoiled a conſiderable part of their market, and kept ſo many worthy lords and gentlemen from filling their coffers with the plate and jewels, they ſo zealouſly longed for? Though Dr. Heylin, whom I leave to anſwer for himſelf, has been pleaſed to obſerve, that it may well be thought, that covetouſneſs ſpurred on this buſineſs (to wit, the pulling down of images) more than zeal.

But there remained ſtill another thing to be reformed which was looked upon as intolerable abuſe by the directors of the reforming company, in being an obſtacle to their moſt pious and laudable deſign of enriching themſelves with the ſpoils of their mother church. I mean the doctrine of purgatory; on which alone was grounded the old cuſtom of praying for the dead. It was indeed a practice ſo ancient, that St. Chryſoſtom attributes it to the apoſtles themſelves. The apoſtles, ſays he, did not in vain command theſe things, that in the venerable and dreadful myſteries (that is, the Maſs) the dead ſhould be remembered. For they knew they would derive a conſiderable advantage from it. Hom. 3. in epiſt. ad Phil. And St. Cyril of Alexandria writes thus: Laſtly we pray for all that die amongſt us; thinking it to be the greateſt help that can be to their ſouls to have the holy and dreadful ſacrifice of the altar offered in ſupplication for them. Cat. Myſtag. 5. p. 241.

G. I perceive then that it was not high treaſon either in the time of thoſe ancient fathers, or even

even of the apoſtles themſelves to ſay Maſs. Nay I find they all prayed for the dead as we do.

P. Very true, Sir. However the directors of the reformation, who were not diſpoſed to ſee things with the ſame eyes as the apoſtles, judged it an unlawful and pernicious practice. And well they might. For if it had been ſuffered to continue, the lands belonging to the chanteries, colleges, and free-chapels (all founded for perpetual prayers for the ſouls of their deceaſed benefactors) muſt have remained in the hands of their former poſſeſſors. And was not that a moſt pernicious doctrine and practice, which would have hindered ſuch a noble booty from falling into true Proteſtant hands unleſs a ſeaſonable godly reformation had put a ſtop to it?

G. Sir, the reflections you have entertained me with, are fully juſtified by Dr. Heylin's ſaying, as you told me, that the great men at court under colour of removing ſuch corruptions, as remained in the church, had caſt their eyes upon the ſpoils of images, and ſhrines. And the improving of their own fortunes by the chantery-lands. And again, that ſuch a reformation was intended, as ſhould moſt viſibly conduce to the advancement of their ſeveral ends. For in reality we muſt own, the reformation was perfectly well contrived to anſwer thoſe ends; and the architects of it ſhewed themſelves to be complete maſters of the trade.

P. I will here give you ſome of Mr. Collier's thoughts upon theſe tranſactions; who according to his polite and moderate way of writing, expreſſes himſelf thus:

"It muſt be confeſſed, (ſays he) there were ſe-
"veral ſhocking circumſtances in the reign of
"Henry VIII. and his children. For to ſee
"churches pulled down or rifled, the plate ſwept
"off

" off the altar, and the holy furniture converted " to common uſe, had no great air of devotion, " To ſee the choir undreſſed to make the drawing- " room and bed-chamber fine, was not very pri- " mitive at firſt view. The forced ſurrender of " abbeys, the maiming of biſhopricks, and lop- " ping the beſt branches of their revenues; the " ſtopping of impropriated tithes from paſſing in " the ancient channel: Theſe things are apt to " puzzle a vulgar capacity, unleſs a man's under- " ſtanding is more than ordinarily improved, he " will be at a loſs to reconcile theſe meaſures with " Chriſtian maxims, and make them fall in with " conſcience and reformation, 2d. Part. 3d. Book. " p. 163."

G. But did not the government meet with any oppoſition from the people?

P. Early care was taken to prevent or diſappoint all popular commotions. For in the firſt place, it was thought fit (ſays Dr. Heylin in his relation of the tranſactions of the firſt year of king Edward's reign) to ſmooth the way to the intended reformation by ſetting out ſome preparatory injunctions; and this to be done by ſending out commiſſioners into all parts of the kingdom, armed with inſtructions to enquire into all eccleſiaſtical concernments; which commiſſioners were accompanied with preachers appointed to inſtruct the people—All which was done to this intent, that the people being prepared by little and little might with more eaſe and leſs oppoſition admit the total alteration in the face of the church, which was intended in due time to be introduced.

We may reaſonably ſuppoſe the preachers here appointed to inſtruct the people were of the neweſt faſhion of the court, grown weary of their breviaries, and the dull thing called celibacy. For it has been obſerved by many, that prieſts converted

verted to the reformation have always been ſingularly devoted to the ſtate of wedlock; for which they had full liberty allowed them by the firſt parliament of Edward VI. as Baker tells us, p. 331. However the number of theſe court-preachers was not ſo great as might have been expected, conſidering the encouragements that were given them by thoſe who were at the helm. For the ſame author tells us, p. 323. that for want of a ſufficient number of preachers, homilies were appointed to be read in churches.

G. What! were they the homilies of the ancient fathers?

P. No, no: They were the homilies of father Cranmer, father Latimer, father Ridley, or ſuch others; much better ſuited to the times, than thoſe of the ancient fathers, which were grown ſtale, and ſmelt rank of Popery.

G. But was there not ſome more effectual courſe taken to prevent diſturbances, than that of preaching and homilizing?

P. Dr. Heylin, in the part of his hiſtory abovementioned, has anſwered this queſtion for me:

" The lord protector and his party, (ſays he) " were more experienced in affairs of ſtate, than " to be told, that all great counſels tending to " innovations in public government, eſpecially " where religion is concerned, are either to be " backed by arms, or otherwiſe prove deſtructive " to the undertakers. For this cauſe he reſolves " to put himſelf at the head of an army; as well " for the ſecurity of his own perſon, and the pre- " ſervation of his party, as for the carrying on of " the deſign againſt all opponents. And for the " raiſing of an army, there could not be found a " fairer colour, nor a more popular pretence, " than a war with Scotland: Not to be made on " any new emergent quarrel (which might be

" apt

" apt to breed ſuſpicion in the heads of the " people) but in purſuit of the great project of the " king deceaſed for uniting that realm by a mar- " riage to the crown of England. On this pre- " tence levies are made in all parts of the king- " dom. He entertained alſo certain regiments of " Walloons and Germans; becauſe they were " conceived more likely to enforce obedience, if " his deſign ſhould meet with any oppoſition, than " the natural Engliſh."

Hence it is plain, that this war with Scotland, was only a politic pretence for keeping a ſtanding army on foot; but the true motive of it was to keep the people in awe, and frighten them into a conformity, by ſhewing them the rod that was to ſcourge them in caſe they ſhould prove refractory. And for this end the protector was wiſe enough not to put too great a confidence in the Engliſh, who were at that time too popiſhly affected, but to call in foreign Proteſtant troops, who he knew would be ready for any military execution upon Papiſts in caſe of need: Whereas if nothing but a war with Scotland had been intended, the king's own natural ſubjects might have ſafely been truſted.

However there were ſome that had the courage to oppoſe the torrent, and act according to the dictates of their conſcience, which convinced them, that a new upſtart religion, never before heard of in the nation ſince its firſt converſion to Chriſtianity, and fabricated only to gratify the luxury of ſome, and avarice of others, could not be that holy religion, which the apoſtles had taught. But the chief of theſe were made examples to ſtrike terror into others. For no fewer than five of the prelatic order, to wit, biſhop Bonner of London, Gardiner of Wincheſter, Tunſtal of Durham, Heath of Rocheſter, and Day of Chi-

cheſter,

cheſter, were deprived of their biſhopricks, and committed to ſeveral priſons, as Baker tells us, p. 323. And thus we ſee the politic and violent means made uſe of to eſtabliſh the Engliſh reformation in the reign of Edward VI. The ſcandalous ſacrileges committed by the moſt zealous promoters of it; and the vile motives that ſpurred them on to it. Which, if it ſuffices not to convince any man, that it was not the work of God, it is in vain to argue with him.

SECT. 9.

Of the Engliſh REFORMATION, as eſtabliſhed by Queen Elizabeth.

G. WELL, but what is all this to the reformation as eſtabliſhed by queen Elizabeth? from whom alone our modern Proteſtants derive their reformed church, as it now ſtands; and glory in having had a *virgin* queen for their ſpecial foundreſs; whom they regard as a perſon choſen by God to deſtroy the ſuperſtitions of Popery, and reſtore religion to its primitive purity.

P. As to her virginity, that is too nice a point for me to touch upon. However Gregorio Leti, a Proteſtant writer of her life, though he extols her wit and beauty, her ſkill in governing, and zeal for the Proteſtant cauſe, is not over favourable to her as to that article; but diſputes it problematically, and leaves it undecided. Nay all hiſtorians agree, that though ſhe never could be prevailed upon to enter into the ſtate of wedlock, ſhe was not altogether proof againſt the temptations of the fleſh, and had her weakneſſes that way no leſs than the meaneſt of her ſubjects.

But, to diſmiſs this odious ſubject (for we are always bound to incline to the moſt favourable opinion both of the living and the dead, when there

there are no poſitive proofs againſt them). This however is moſt certain, that her character ſtands upon record, ſullied with crimes conſiderable enough to entertain ſome doubts of her divine election to the apoſtleſhip. I mean not her having been the fruit of an adultreous bed, becauſe that was the crime of her vicious parents, not her's; but thoſe of her own free will. As firſt, her diſſembling her religion during the whole reign of her ſiſter Mary; in ſo much, that (as Dr. Heylin tells us, p. 270.) ſhe appeared not a little diſſatisfied in not being able, by her outward conformity, to prevail upon the queen to believe that ſhe was Catholicly affected. 2dly, Her unchriſtian politics in fomenting and ſupporting underhand the furious rebellion of the Scots againſt their lawful ſovereign, with whom ſhe at that time entertained a friendly correſpondence. How far tampering with the ſubjects of a foreign prince may be allowed of in time of war, I will not pretend to decide; but I cannot think it juſtifiable in time of peace, or conſiſtent with mutual profeſſions of friendſhip. Nay it appears to be directly contrary to an inbred principle of human nature, which obliges us to do by others as we would be done by.

Thirdly (beſides other crimes, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter) her violating the laws of nations, nay of God and nature, by the moſt perfidious and inhuman treatment of the queen of Scots, is a ſtain of infamy upon her memory never to be waſhed off. For that unfortunate princeſs, after ſuch a barbarous uſage in her own country, as filled all Chriſtendom with horror, (as a modern Proteſtant author expreſſes it) being reduced to a neceſſity of ſeeking her ſafety elſewhere, fled for ſanctuary into England; to which ſhe had been encouraged by queen Elizabeth

zabeth herſelf, who had invited her thither with the moſt ſolemn promiſes of protection and ſafety. * But ſhe had no ſooner got her into her power, but ſhe deprived her of her liberty; refuſed to ſee her; and after an impriſonment of above eighteen years, imbrued her hands in her innocent blood.

Such was the virgin-queen, in whom our Engliſh Proteſtants glory as the ſpecial foundreſs of their reformed church; and whoſe birth-day they ſtill keep with an annual religious ſolemnity. So apt are men, when once engaged in a wrong cauſe, to overact their parts; imagining to conceal its defects with the duſt they raiſe about it. But the more Proteſtants affect to trumpet the praiſes of the royal foundreſs of their church, the more they excite mens' curioſity to enquire into her life and conduct; which when, inſtead of finding it adorned with the moſt beautiful evangelical virtues of humility, meekneſs, ſincerity, juſtice, charity, &c. (which are the diſtinguiſhing qualities of perſons choſen by God, to propagate his holy faith) they find on the contrary ſtained with the blackeſt crimes of hypocriſy, duplicity, injuſtice, cruelty, murder, and the like, † it makes them apt to reflect, that if the reformation, whereof ſhe was the author, had been the proper work and cauſe of God, his infinite wiſdom would not have choſen a perſon for the chief inſtrument of it, whoſe life and actions he foreſaw would be a diſhonour and ſcandal to his holy cauſe.

But let us now ſuppoſe that queen Elizabeth was innocence itſelf; our Engliſh Proteſtants ought rather to bluſh than glory in her as their foundreſs, and keep a day of humiliation inſtead of thankſgiving for the groſs overſight committed by

* See the preface. † Ibid.

by their forefathers in making a woman the head of their church. That is, the ſource of all eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, the ſupreme judge of controverſies in religion, and governor in ſpirituals. A thing unheard of before, and never followed ſince by any national church upon earth.

I ſhall here repeat to you a part of the ſpeech made by biſhop Heath in the houſe of lords, when the ſubject of the queen's ſupremacy was under debate. That prelate, after having enlarged in the firſt part of his diſcourſe upon the inconveniencies of a ſeparation from the ſee of Rome, which I omit for brevity's ſake, proceeds in the following manner:

"Now to the ſecond deliberation; wherein I "promiſed to move your honours to conſider, "what this ſupremacy is, which we go about by "virtue of this act to give to the queen, and "wherein it does conſiſt, whether in ſpiritual go- "vernment or temporal.—If ſpiritual, as theſe "words of the act do import, ſupreme head of "the church of England immediately and next "under God, then it ſhould be conſidered in what "points this ſpiritual government does conſiſt; "and the points being well known, it ſhould be "conſidered, whether this houſe has authority to "grant them, and her highneſs ability to receive "them.

"As concerning the points wherein this ſpi- "ritual government does conſiſt, I have, in read- "ing the goſpel, and the whole courſe of divi- "nity thereupon (as to my vocation belongeth) "obſerved theſe four, as chief amongſt many "others; The firſt is, the power to looſe and bind "ſins: When our Saviour, in ordaining Peter the "chief and head-governor of his church, ſaid "unto him, to thee will I give the keys of the "kingdom of Heaven. Now it ſhould be con-

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" ſidered by your wiſdoms, whether you have " ſufficient authority to grant unto her majeſty " this firſt part of ſpiritual government, and ſay " unto her, to thee will we give the keys of the " kingdom of Heaven. If you ſay, yea, then " do we require the ſight of warrant and com- " miſſion by virtue of God's word; and if you " ſay, no; then you may be well aſſured and per- " ſuade yourſelves, that you have not ſufficient " authority to make her highneſs ſupreme head " of the church of Chriſt here in this realm.

" The ſecond point of ſpiritual government " is gathered out of theſe words of our Saviour " ſpoken to St. Peter in the 20th chapter of John: " *Feed my lambs; feed my ſheep.* Now whether " your honours have authority by this court of " parliament, to ſay unto our ſovereign lady, " feed you the flock of Chriſt, you muſt ſhew " your warrant and commiſſion for it. And farther " that her majeſty, being a woman by birth and " nature, is not qualified by God's word to feed the " flock of Chriſt, appears moſt plainly from St. " Paul in this wiſe: *Let women be ſilent in the church.* " *For it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak; but to* " *be in ſubjection, as the law ſaith.* And it fol- " loweth in the ſame place, *for it is not ſeemly for* " *a woman to ſpeak in the church.* 1 Cor. C 14. " v. 34, 35. And in his 1ſt epiſtle to Timothy " he ſays, *I allow not that a woman be a teacher,* " *or be above her huſband, but keep herſelf in ſilence.* " Therefore it appears likewiſe, that as your " honours have not authority to give to her high- " neſs this ſecond point of ſpiritual government, " to feed the flock of Chriſt, ſo by St. Paul's doc- " trine, her highneſs may not intermeddle her- " ſelf with the ſame. And therefore ſhe cannot " be ſupreme head of the church here of Eng- " land.

" The 3d chief point of ſpiritual government " is gathered out of theſe words of our Saviour " Chriſt to St. Peter, in the 22d chapter of St. " Luke's goſpel: *I prayed for thee, that thy faith* " *may not fail. Do thou alſo, when thou art come* " *back, confirm thy brethren*; that is, ratify them " in wholeſome doctrine and adminiſtration of " the ſacraments; which are the holy inſtruments " of God, ſo inſtituted and ordained for our ſan- " tification, that without them his grace is not " to be received. But to preach and adminiſter " the ſacraments a woman can not be admitted. " And therefore ſhe cannot be the ſupreme head " of Chriſt's church.

" The 4th, and laſt chief point of ſpiritual go- " vernment, which I promiſed to note unto you, " does conſiſt in the excommunication and ſpiri- " tual puniſhment of all ſuch as ſhall ſhew them- " ſelves not to be the obedient children of Chriſt's " church; of which authority our Saviour Chriſt " ſpeaks, Matthew 18. *If thy brother, having of-* " *fended, will not hear thy charitable admonition, whe-* " *ther ſecretly at firſt, or yet before one or two wit-* " *neſſes, then complain of him to the church*; *and if he* " *will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a* " *heathen or publican.*

" So the apoſtle did excommunicate the noto- " rious fornicator, that was among the Corin- " thians, and this by the authority of his apoſ- " tleſhip; unto which apoſtles, Chriſt aſcending " to Heaven, did leave the whole ſpiritual go- " vernment of his church; as it appeareth by " thoſe plain words of St. Paul in his epiſtle to " the Epheſians, C. 4. ſaying, *He has given to his* " *church ſome to be apoſtles, ſome evangeliſts,* " *ſome paſtors and teachers for the conſummation* " *of the ſaints, to the work of the miniſtry, for* " *the building up of the body of Chriſt.* But a

" woman

" woman in the degrees of the church is not " called to be an apoſtle, nor evangeliſt, nor to " be a paſtor, nor a teacher, nor a preacher; " therefore ſhe cannot be ſupreme head of Chriſt's " church, nor yet of any part thereof. For this " high government God has appointed only the " biſhops and paſtors of his people; as St. Paul " plainly witneſſeth in theſe words ſpoken to the " paſtors of the church of Epheſus: *Take heed* " *therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the flock over* " *which the Holy Ghoſt has made you overſeers, to* " *to govern the church of God.* Act. 20. v. 28.

" And thus much I have here ſaid, right honour- " able and my very good lords, againſt this act of " ſupremacy, for the diſcharge of my poor con- " ſcience, and for the love, and fear and dread, " that I chiefly owe unto God, to my ſovereign " lady the queen's majeſty's highneſs, and to " your honours all; whereas otherwiſe, without " mature conſideration of all theſe premiſes, your " honours will never be able to ſhew your faces " before your enemies in this matter; being ſo " ſtrange a ſpectacle and example in Chriſt's " church, as in this realm is only to be found, and " in no other Chriſtian realm."

This plain diſcourſe lays fully open the abſurdity of making a woman the ſupreme head of a national church in ſpirituals. And indeed the church of England became by it the ſubject of deriſion and laughter in all the Chriſtian kingdoms upon the earth, as it juſtly deſerved. She aboliſhed (ſays a modern Proteſtant writer) the ſupremacy of the pope, and aſſumed that title to herſelf; which at firſt ſeemed a jeſt to the reſt of the world, by reaſon of the incapacity of her ſex for the miniſterial function. p. 259. Calvin himſelf, though a well-wiſher to all ſorts of reformations, could not forbear making his ſatyrical jeſts upon

it; and Dr. Heylin had reaſon to ſay, that the thing ſeemed to be abhorrent even to nature and policy, that a woman ſhould be declared ſupreme head on earth of the church of England.

G. But did you not tell me, that the 37th article of religion declares poſitively, that the act of parliament concerning the queen's ſupremacy only gave her that prerogative, which has been given to all godly princes in holy ſcriptures by God himſelf. That is, to rule all eſtates and degrees committed to her charge by God, whether they be eccleſiaſtical or temporal? And does not this fully juſtify that act?

P. On the contrary, it only ſhews, that Proteſtants themſelves were ſcandalized at it, and ought to daub the matter over as well as they could by ſuch an ambiguous interpretation of it, as might ſignify either a ſpiritual or temporal ſupremacy only, and ſhould ſpecify neither. Whereas it is manifeſt, that the real intention of the parliament was, to beſtow on queen Elizabeth the very ſame ſupremacy, as had before been beſtowed upon her two predeceſſors Henry VIII. and Edward VI. by virtue whereof they were made ſupreme heads of the church of England in ſpirituals, as has been fully ſhewed. Though neither the one nor the other made ſuch an antic figure, either at home or abroad, as a female head ſet upon the venerable myſtical body of Chriſt; a whole national church built upon the foundation of a woman, and (what was but a jeſt before) a kind of Pope-Joan ſet up indeed, the head of the church of England.

G. But ſuppoſe a Proteſtant ſhould inſiſt peremptorily upon the words of the 37th article, and maintain from it, that you wrong his church (which muſt ſurely be allowed to know its own meaning beſt) in pretending that queen Elizabeth

Elizabeth was made ſupreme head of it in ſpirituals; how would you anſwer him?

P. With a great deal of eaſe, by ſhewing firſt, that the precarious interpretation of a few private perſons cannot invalidate the force of a ſolemn act of parliament with the royal ſanction to it. But 2dly, by ſhewing, that the interpretation contained in the 37th article, if meant of the queen's ſupremacy over the clergy as well as laity in temporals only, is both frivolous and contradictory to the plain meaning of the act. It is frivolous, becauſe it renders the act itſelf a mere mock-act, and of no manner of uſe. For what man in his ſenſes ever doubted, but that a ſovereign prince, acknowledged for ſuch, as queen Elizabeth was, has the ſupreme authority of governing all her ſubjects, both clergy and laity, in temporal concerns? Was there any need of a ſpecial act of parliament to determine a point, which no man had ever diſputed? Or is it probable, that if no more had been intended by that act, it would have met with any oppoſition either in the houſe of commons or houſe of lords? And yet it was very warmly oppoſed in both. For in the houſe of lords, there was not a biſhop, not excepting Kitchin of Landaff himſelf, who conformed afterwards, but voted againſt it. And in the houſe of commons (though the duke of Norfolk and earl of Arundel, in hopes of gaining the queen's favour, with ſeveral others, had uſed their utmoſt ſkill and induſtry in managing the elections in their ſeveral counties for the returning of ſuch perſons for parliament-men, as they conceived moſt likely to comply with their intentions for a reformation, (as Dr. Heylin tells us, p. 107) yet the ſtruggle was ſo great, that it was carried in favour of the court-party by a very ſmall majority. I only add, that biſhop Heath (who ſurely underſtood

the true meaning of that act, and was a man of excellent parts) muſt be thought to have argued like a child in the ſpeech he made againſt the queen's ſupremacy, if nothing more was meant by it than that ſhe had the ſupreme authority of governing all her ſubjects, both clergy and laity, in temporal concerns, which he fully owned in the firſt part of that ſpeech.

But this interpretation of the act is not only frivolous, but over and above inconſiſtent with the words both of the act, and the oath annexed to it. The act is worded thus:

"And that alſo it may pleaſe your highneſs, "that it may be eſtabliſhed and enacted by the "authority aforeſaid, that ſuch juriſdictions, "privileges, ſuperiorities and pre-eminences, ſpi-"ritual and eccleſiaſtical, as by any ſpiritual or "eccleſiaſtical power or authority has heretofore "been or may lawfully be exerciſed or uſed for the "viſitation of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate and perſons, "and for reformation, order, and correction of "the ſame, and of all manner of hereſies, er-"rors, ſchiſms, &c. ſhall for ever, by authority "of this preſent parliament, be united and annexed "to the imperial crown of this realm.——And "the oath annexed to the act is as follows: I, A. "B. do utterly teſtify and declare in my con-"ſcience, that the queen's highneſs is the only "ſupreme governor of this realm, and of all other "her highneſs's dominions and countries, as well "in all ſpiritual or eccleſiaſtical things and cauſes, "as temporal."

Now if this act and oath did not fix the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical authority and juriſdiction in queen Elizabeth, and declare her ſupreme head in ſpirituals of the church of England, then words muſt loſe their obvious and known ſignification. For I obſerve,

First,

First, that the act itſelf gave the queen all ſuch ſpiritual and eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction in general, as by any ſpiritual or eccleſiaſtical power or authority had ever been, and can lawfully be exerciſed. And was not this declaring her ſupreme head or governeſs, call it by what name you pleaſe, of the church of England in ſpirituals? Was it not veſting in her perſon all the juriſdiction, which any eccleſiaſtical perſon, of what rank ſoever, had ever exerciſed in the dominions of Great Britain?

2dly, It gave her a ſpecial power or authority to viſit, reform or correct all manner of errors, hereſies, ſchiſms, &c. All which are properly exerciſes of eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction; and though in biſhops they are limited to their reſpective dioceſſes, and ſometimes reſtrained by particular exemptions, the full exerciſe of this eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction was on the contrary, by virtue of the aboveſaid act, granted to queen Elizabeth over all the dioceſſes in her dominions, without reſtriction or limitation.

But 3dly, the oath annexed to the ſaid act of parliament, declares, in expreſs terms, the queen's highneſs the only ſupreme governor, as well in all eccleſiaſtical or ſpiritual things or cauſes, as temporal. It does not ſay, that ſhe had the ſupreme authority of governing all perſons, whether eccleſiaſtics or laics, (for that is implied in every ordinary oath of allegiance) but that ſhe was the only ſupreme governor in all ſpiritual or eccleſiaſtical things or cauſes; which differs very much from the other, and imports no leſs than that ſhe was the ſupreme judge of all controverſies in religion, and the ſource of all eccleſiaſtical as well as temporal juriſdiction in her dominions. Becauſe as all temporal authority or juriſdiction in every government flows from the ſecular head, ſo all

ſpiritual juriſdiction flows from the ſpiritual head as from its ſource.

Thus then was laid the foundation of the Proteſtant Engliſh church, as it now ſtands. For all former acts relating to the ſupremacy having been repealed in queen Mary's reign, the reformation began entirely upon a new footing in the year 1558, which was the firſt of queen Elizabeth's reign. And though it commonly takes its date from the year wherein king Henry aſſumed the ſpiritual ſupremacy, and thereby opened the way to the ſeveral innovations that followed afterwards, yet to ſpeak properly, the Proteſtant church of England, as to its preſent eſtabliſhment and conſtitution, can trace its origin no higher than the year 1558, when its foundation was firſt laid upon queen Elizabeth's ſpiritual ſupremacy as its chief ground-work. And ſo, inſtead of being built upon the foundation of the apoſtles, that is, of having ſome ſucceſſor of the apoſtles (who never had any female ſucceſſors) for its founder, it has ſomething very ſingularly different from all national churches in the world, in having been founded and modelled not only by a lay but by a female head: Though St. Paul would not ſuffer a woman even to ſpeak in the church, that is, to intermeddle with eccleſiaſtical affairs, as biſhop Heath has very judiciouſly obſerved.

G. It was indeed ſomewhat aukwardly contrived, to conſtitute a perſon ſupreme head and governor of a church, who by her very ſex was incapacitated even to ſpeak in it. For how can a church be governed by a head, whoſe tongue is tied up, and not allowed to ſpeak?

SECT.

SECT. 10.

The Queen's SUPREMACY eſtabliſhed without the Concurrence or Conſent of the Clergy.

P. BUT as the eſtabliſhment and conſtitution of the Proteſtant church of England, as it now ſtands, was built upon a weak foundation, to wit, the ſpiritual ſupremacy of a perſon incapable by her very ſex even of the loweſt degree of eccleſiaſtical dignity or function; ſo has it another eſſential flaw, never to be repaired: I mean the nullity of that very power or authority by which it was eſtabliſhed. For it was carried on entirely by the ſecular power, without the concurrence or conſent of the clergy, nay in direct oppoſition to it.

G. But, why is that an eſſential flaw?

P. Becauſe it is a barefaced violation of the divine inſtitution, which no power upon earth can alter or reverſe.

G. Pray, Sir, explain yourſelf.

P. I think the matter is ſelf-evident. For as perſons can have no part in the civil government, unleſs they be qualified according to law, that is, according to the laws of the civil ſociety whereof they are members; ſo neither can they legally exerciſe any part in the eccleſiaſtical government, unleſs they be qualified according to the laws of the church; but eſpecially thoſe, which Chriſt himſelf has eſtabliſhed for the government of it. If therefore they, who diſpoſed of the ſpiritual ſupremacy in favour of queen Elizabeth and her ſucceſſors were wholly unqualified, according to the laws eſtabliſhed by Chriſt, for the exerciſe of that eccleſiaſtical power; then it follows, that they were as incapable of beſtowing the eccleſiaſ-

tical ſupremacy of the church of England upon her, as ſhe was of receiving it.

Now it is manifeſt, both from the ſcriptural texts quoted by biſhop Heath, and from the univerſal tradition and practice of all ages, that Chriſt, the divine founder and lawgiver of his church, ſettled the whole ſpiritual government of it immediately upon the apoſtles, and after them upon the biſhops and paſtors, that were to be their ſucceſſors in the apoſtolical miniſtry as long as his church ſhould laſt, that is, to the end of the world——*For he gave to his church, ſome to be apoſtles, and ſome evangeliſts, and ſome paſtors and teachers: For the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the building up of the body of Chriſt, till we all meet in the unity of the faith, and of the knowlege of the Son of God*, Epheſ. 4. v. 11, 12, 13—Theſe therefore alone are the ſpiritual rulers of God's appointment: Theſe alone are qualified according to God's inſtitution to enact eccleſiaſtical laws, or exerciſe any part in the ſpiritual government of his church. And, by conſequence, if the beſtowing of the ſpiritual ſupremacy on queen Elizabeth, and entailing it upon her heirs and ſucceſſors, was a mere gift of the ſtate, and wholly owing to the ſecular power, it wanted the ſanction of that authority, which Chriſt eſtabliſhed for the ſpiritual government of his church, and was a manifeſt violation of the divine inſtitution.

Let us then ſee, what part the clergy had in that ſtupendous act, which is the ground-work of the Engliſh reformation, whereon the whole fabrick of the preſent church of England, and its reformed religion, is built:

In the firſt place, it is notoriouſly known, that not one ſingle biſhop in the parliament aſſented to it. Againſt theſe ſtatutes (ſays Cambden, p. 19) nine

nine biſhops in the higher houſe, which were preſent that day, ſtifly impugned. For now there were no more than fourteen living. Dr. Heylin ſays fifteen.

G. But ſince ſome of the biſhops were abſent from the houſe, we cannot know for certain, whether they would have been for, or againſt the bill.

P. Sir, we are ſure they were againſt it after it had paſſed, and expreſſed their abhorrence of it in fact, even with the loſs of their biſhopricks and liberty over and above. For Cambden tells us, p. 28. that all the biſhops (except Antony Kitchin of Landaff, who had alſo voted againſt it, and whom he calls the calamity of his ſee) refuſed the oath of ſupremacy; which was tendered to them ſoon after the diſſolution of the parliament, and thereupon were immediately deprived of their biſhopricks, and ſent to ſeveral priſons. But let us alſo ſee what Dr. Heylin writes upon this ſubject:

" It was (ſays he) upon the 8th of May, that " the parliament ended; and on the 24th of June, " that the public liturgy was to be officiated " in all the churches of the kingdom. In the " performance of which ſervice the biſhops " giving no encouragement, and many of the " clergy being backward in it, it was thought fit " to put them to the final teſt, and either to " bring them to conformity, or to beſtow their " places and perferments on more tractable perſons. The biſhops at that time were reduced " to a narrower number, than at any time be- " fore—ſo that there were no more than fifteen " living of that ſacred order; and they being " called in the beginning of July by certain lords " of the privy council, were required to take the " oath of ſupremacy. Kitchin, of Landaff, alone " taken it; who, having formerly ſubmitted to

" every

" every change, reſolved to ſhew himſelf no " changeling. By all the reſt it was refuſed; that " is, by Dr. Heath, archbiſhop of York, Bonner, " of London, &c. and they were thereupon de- " prived of their biſhopricks."

Here it is manifeſt, that the article of the queen's ſpiritual ſupremacy, which not only cut off England from the ancient faith, the Catholic church, but was the very baſis, and has ever ſince been the chief bulwark of the Engliſh reformation, was ſo far from being countenanced or aſſented to by thoſe of the prelatic order, that on the contrary they expreſſed their utmoſt abhorrence and deteſtation of it; and all but Kitchin, the diſhonour of his character, perſiſted to their very laſt breath in their oppoſition to it. But let us now ſee, whether the convocation, which repreſents the body of inferior clergy, or the two univerſities, were more favourable to it than the biſhops.

Mr. Fuller, L. 9. writes thus of the convocation, which ſat at the ſame time with queen Elizabeth's firſt parliament: It is obſerved in nature, that when one twin is of an unuſual ſtrength and bigneſs, the other born with it is weak and dwindles away. So here queen Elizabeth's firſt parliament being very active in matters of religion, the convocation, younger brother thereunto, was little employed, leſs regarded. It ſeems it was not judged ſafe at that time to truſt churchmen with church-affairs, though our bleſſed Saviour was of another mind, and appointed firſt biſhops, and under them paſtors, and teachers to be the ſpiritual guides and rulers of his church unto the end of the world.

However, neither the convocation nor univerſities were wholly idle, or unconcerned ſpectators of what the ſecular power was buſily carrying on to the prejudice of the ancient religion. For, as the

the ſame author tells us, L. 9. the convocation put forth five articles, ſubſcribed to by both univerſities, as a public teſtimony of their faith: The three firſt contained a ſhort expoſition of the Catholic doctrine of the real preſence, tranſubſtantiation, and the Maſs. The two laſt were theſe, viz. 1. That the chief power of governing the church of Chriſt was given to St. Peter, and his lawful ſucceſſors in the ſee apoſtolic, as to the vicar of Chriſt. And 2dly, that the authority of treating and defining matters relating to faith, ſacraments, and church diſcipline has always hitherto belonged, and ought only to belong to the paſtors of the church, whom the Holy Ghoſt has appointed in it for that end, and not to laymen.

Thus we plainly ſee that the ſettling of the ſpiritual ſupremacy upon queen Elizabeth and her ſucceſſors, was carried in direct oppoſition to the judgment of the whole body of the Engliſh clergy.

Whence I infer firſt, that ſince this was a matter purely ſpiritual even of the higheſt importance, and therefore belonged by divine right to the eccleſiaſtical tribunal, it was decided by illegal and incompetent judges; as being unqualified by God's own law; who never appointed laymen, but the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles to govern his church and decide eccleſiaſtical cauſes.

I infer 2dly, that the divine inſtitution of epiſcopacy and epiſcopal government was doubly violated in the very laying of the foundation of the preſent Proteſtant church of England. Firſt, by entailing for ever the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical government of it upon a lay-perſon, whether man, woman, or child. 2dly, By ſetting up this new ſyſtem of church-government in utter contempt of, and oppoſition to the whole national epiſcopal authority then in being.

Whence

Whence I conclude with this dilemma, to wit, epiſcopal government is either eſſential to the conſtitution of Chriſt's church, or not. If it be, the preſent Proteſtant church of England has an eſſential defect in it's very foundation: I mean, the ſupreme ſpiritual authority of a lay-head; which alſo it derives wholly and ſolely from the ſecular power, without the leaſt concurrence or approbation of the epiſcopal authority, as has been fully proved. But if epiſcopal government be not eſſential to the conſtitution of Chriſt's church, and may be either ſet up, or laid aſide like ordinary human inſtitutions, according to the will and pleaſure of men, then the Preſbyterians and other enemies of epiſcopacy have as fair a title to be a part of Chriſt's true church, as the church of England can pretend to. For if epiſcopal authority may be laid aſide at one time, I ſee no reaſon why it may not be caſt off for good and all. And if the ſecular power may legally new-model the hierarchy, ſo as to conſtitute a lay-head over the church, and even that independently of the epiſcopal authority, I am not ſharp-ſighted enough to ſee any ſolid reaſon, why the ſame power may not as legally commit for ever the whole government of it to ſuch perſons as it thinks fitting; whether they be lay-miniſters made ſo by lay-ordination; or of that rank, whom the church of Ehgland calls biſhops. Nay I do not ſee, why the ſecular power, when their hands were in, might not have gone farther, and declared queen Elizabeth, in expreſs terms, univerſal patriarch, as well as ſupreme head of the church of England. For the one is no more than the other contrary to the expreſs inſtitution of Chriſt.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Some Remarks upon the Progreſs and Motives of Queen ELIZABETH's REFORMATION.

G. BUT though the biſhops and inferior clergy were againſt the act of ſupremacy, when it paſſed, did they not in proceſs of time give their after-approbation and ſanction to it, by conforming to the religion eſtabliſhed by law? For I have heard that but very few, at leaſt of the latter, ſtood out.

P. As to the biſhops, I have already told you, that they perſiſted to their deaths in their oppoſition to it. And though they were violently deprived by the lay-power both of their ſees and liberty, yet like the apoſtles in chains, they did not therefore forfeit that ſpiritual juriſdiction and authority, which belonged to them by divine right, and could not be taken from them but in the caſe of ſome canonical fault, and by a canonical trial, and judgment pronounced againſt them.

Whence it follows, that whatever the inferior clergy did to the prejudice of the ancient faith of England, whether by a forced or voluntary compliance with the times, was of no manner of weight, becauſe they acted without authority, and contrary to the obedience they had ſworn to thoſe, who were their lawful ſuperiors in the ſight of God. So that the only conſequence that can be drawn from it is, that there are always great numbers of unſound and putrid members in the viſible church of Chriſt, who generally diſcover themſelves either in time of perſecution and trial, or when they have a fair opportunity offered them of gratifying ſome predominant inclination; which two circumſtances concurring in the reign

reign of queen Elizabeth, it is no wonder that great numbers of the inferior clergy abandoned the ancient religion, as rats do a houſe, which is ready to fall, and remove to better quarters: Some for ſafety, others for eaſe or profit; according as their prevailing paſſions ſwayed them. And I cannot here forbear obſerving, with how much partiality and little judgment, ſome Proteſtant writers glory in the numbers of theſe miſerable proſelytes: Since it is apparent, that the charms or terrors of this world had the greateſt influence upon their pretended converſion.

G. But what reaſon have you to ſay ſo? For Proteſtants will on the contrary maintain, it was a full conviction of conſcience, that brought them ſo readily over to the reformation.

P. They may pretend what they pleaſe: But the very nature of the thing juſtifies my obſervation. For when puniſhments are inflicted on the one hand, and conſiderable advantages offered on the other: When non-compliance is attended with bitter ſufferings, and temporizing encouraged with rewards, a ſudden change in matters of religion is juſtly aſcribed either to the fear of the one, or hope of the other. And this was the caſe from the very beginning of queen Elizabeth's reformation. Great numbers of the inferior clergy, who came over to it, were frightened into a compliance, and taught to conform by the ſufferings of others. They ſaw their biſhops impriſoned, and all thoſe of their own rank, who had refuſed the oath of ſupremacy, turned out of their livings, and reduced to beggary. So that they had no other choice left, but either to conform or ſtarve; having nothing but their benefices to depend upon for a livelihood. A terrible temptation to thoſe, who are not armed

armed with virtue ſtrong enough to undergo a lingering martyrdom!

But the greateſt part were prevailed upon by the powerful charms of liberty and eaſe. For beſides the liberty they were ſure to enjoy of gratifying their incontinence, as the effect ſoon ſhewed, the queen had by the plenitude of her eccleſiaſtical power contrived ſuch a commodious reformation for them, that if they would but conform, they ſhould keep their benefices, and at the ſame time be eaſed of the moſt painful part of the duties annexed to them. This is manifeſt to the eyes of all mankind, in the remarkable difference there is between the fatiguing duties incumbent on the paſtors of the Catholic church, and the eaſy lives, comparatively, of Proteſtant miniſters.

G. I have heard this obſervation made by many, and the fact is notorious. For Proteſtant miniſters have neither Maſs nor office to ſay, nor confeſſions to hear, nor any functions to break their night's reſt: Nor ſcarce the fifth part of our holy days to interrupt their more agreeable amuſements. So that they are in no danger of being over-burdened with paſtoral cares; and a good living ſerves to maintain a female companion in a very comfortable way.

P. Compare this eaſy way of ſerving the church with the laborious lives of Catholic paſtors, and the difference will appear as great, as there is between the broad and narrow way mentioned in the goſpel. For if we but conſider the indiſpenſable obligation Catholic paſtors are under, of a daily long office beſides their Maſſes, attended with prayers before and after, and frequent public ſervices for the dead, we may ſay without exaggeration, that taking one day with another, their daily taſk of public and private prayers is greater, than a Proteſtant miniſter is bound

bound by his functions to perform in ſeveral days. Add to this the irkſome burden of the confeſſional, where thoſe eſpecially, who have a numerous flock under their charge, are ſometimes kept for ſeveral hours in hearing; and none but they, who have had the experience of it, can be ſenſible how heavy a burden this is. But there flows from it another painful obligation of being ready at all hours, and in all ſeaſons to adminiſter the ſacraments of penance and extreme unction, and the Viaticum to the ſick, and it would be highly ſcandalous amongſt us, if either the darkneſs of a rainy and tempeſtuous night, or the rigour of the ſeaſon, or finally the danger of contagious diſtempers, though ever ſo mortal, ſhould hinder a Catholic paſtor, when called upon, from performing this duty with all chearfulneſs, even to the meaneſt of his flock.

Now ſince it is manifeſt, that queen Elizabeth's good-natured reformation, by aboliſhing the Maſs, together with the ſacraments of penance and extreme unction, and prayers for the dead, and the other commodious changes made by her, eaſed all thoſe of the clergy, that would conform, from the moſt painful part of their functions, I think it is not to be wondered (conſidering mens' natural proneneſs to liberty and eaſe) that great numbers of them ſhould by this alluring bait be drawn into a compliance, which ſecured them in the quiet poſſeſſion of their eccleſiaſtical livings, and at the ſame time delivered them in a trice from the Popiſh yoke of thoſe laborious duties, which till then had been inſeparably annexed to their livings.

G. Truly if Proteſtants pretend to boaſt of ſuch converts as theſe, we may juſtly fear, the enemy of man's ſalvation will come in for a large ſhare in the glory of their conqueſts. For when the inclinations

clinations of flesh and blood, and the attractives both of interest and ease appear manifestly to favour a change from one religion to another, it is no rash judgment to conclude, it is not a conviction, but want of conscience; nor a love of truth, but the love of the world, to which such conversions are owing.

P. It is a good saying of Mr. Dryden, that a down-hill reformation rolls apace. And truly queen Elizabeth took care to model her reformation according to this agreeable platform, by suiting it to the natural inclinations of all degrees and conditions of men. The laity, whether rich or poor, found their account in it by being delivered by it from a great number of troublesome fasts and Popish holydays; but above all, from the ungrateful task of confessing their sins; which subjected them to the importune remonstrances and reprimands of their ghostly fathers, besides the performance of the penances enjoined them. The clergy, as you have already seen, were over and above eased by it of the most painful part of their ministerial functions, got wives into the bargain, and not only kept their former livings to maintain them, but lived in hopes of improving their fortunes by stepping into richer benefices, by the removal of those who should refuse to conform.

The queen herself had the greatest interest upon earth to determine her to discard the pope; which, as I have already observed, was the fundamental article of the intended reformation. Let us hear Dr. Heylin's judgment of the religious motive that induced her to it: She knew very well, (says he) that her legitimacy and the pope's supremacy could not stand together, page 275. Very right: For if she had acknowledged the pope's supremacy, she must have stood to his verdict relating to the invalidity of king Henry's marriage with

with her mother, Anne Bolen; which would have been to own herſelf a baſtard, and render her title to the crown at leaſt doubtful. A reformation was therefore neceſſary, both to ſave her honour and ſecure her title; and theſe were two convincing proofs, that the pope was no longer ſupreme head of the church of England, though he had a preſcription of 900 years to ſupport his title to it.

But ſhe had other motives full as pure and diſintereſted as this to carry on that godly work. For though the great harveſt accruing from the plunder of the church had been reaped in the two reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. yet there were no contemptible gleanings remaining by the death of queen Mary, to invite her to follow the footſteps of her two reforming royal predeceſſors. Let us hear Dr. Heylin ſpeak once more:

"Her firſt parliament (ſays he) reſtored to the "crown the tenths and firſt fruits, firſt ſettled "thereon in the time of Henry VIII. and after- "wards given back by queen Mary. They alſo "paſſed an act of diſſolution of all ſuch monaſte- "ries, convents, and religious orders as had been "founded by the queen deceaſed. By virtue of "which act the queen was repoſſeſſed of all thoſe "lands, which had been granted by her ſiſter to "the monks of Weſtminſter and Sheen, the "knights hoſpitallers, the nuns of Sion, with "the manſion-houſes re-edified for the obſervants "of Greenwich, and the black friars in Smith- "field." p. 280.

G. But how could queen Elizabeth hinder the parliament's generous liberality towards her? For was it adviſable for her to refuſe the royal aſſent to a bill they had paſſed in favour of her, or diſoblige her parliament, whilſt it was in ſo good an humour?

P. Alas,

P. Alas, good Lady! Her caſe was doubtleſs very hard. For it cannot be queſtioned, but ſhe was forced to uſe great violence to her tender conſcience, in condeſcending to enrich herſelf with the ſpoils of the church. However ſhe accepted of the preſent made her, with a good grace: Nor does it appear upon record, that ſhe made the leaſt objection to it.

G. I preſume at leaſt ſhe kept her hands clear from invading any part of the biſhops-lands. For I have been told ſhe was a zealous promoter of epiſcopacy.

P. If Dr. Heylin may be believed (and he relates nothing but plain fact) ſhe found ways and means, by the help of her good parliament, to manage the revenues of the vacant biſhopricks ſo diſcreetly, that her zeal for epiſcopacy did not any ways hinder a very conſiderable part of the church's patrimony from being ſafely conveyed into her coffers.

"It was enacted (ſays Dr. Heylin) by her firſt "parliament, that in the vacancy of any arch-"biſhoprick, or biſhoprick, it ſhould be lawful "for the queen to iſſue out a commiſſion under "the great ſeal, for taking a ſurvey of all caſtles, "manors, lands, tenements, and all other here-"ditaments to the ſaid epiſcopal ſees belonging, "or appertaining; and to take into her hands any "of the ſaid caſtles, manors, lands, tenements, "hereditaments, &c. as to her ſeemed good; giv-"ing to the ſaid archbiſhops and biſhops as much "annual rents, to be raiſed upon impropriations, "tithes, and portions of tithes, as they did "amount to, p. 292.

"Of this ſuch advantages were made, as moſt "redounded to the profit of the queen and her "courtiers. Upon which grounds, as all the "biſhops ſees were ſo long kept vacant, before "they

" they were filled, ſo in the following times they " were kept void one after another, till the beſt " flowers in the whole garden of the church had " been culled out of it, p. 292, 293.

" There was another clauſe in the ſaid ſta- " tute, by which the patrimony of the church " was as much dilapidated *Sede plena*, as it was " by this in times of vacancy. For by that " clauſe, all biſhops were reſtrained from making " any grants of their farms and manors, for " more than twenty-one years, or three lives at " the moſt, except it were to the queen, her heirs " and ſucceſſors (and under that pretence to any " of her hungry courtiers) they might be granted " in fee-farm, or for a leaſe of 99 years, as it " pleaſed the parties. By which means Crediton " was diſmembered from the ſee of Exon, the " goodly manour of Sherborn from that of Saliſ- " bury; and many fair manors were alienated for " ever, from the rich ſees of Wincheſter, Ely, " and indeed what not?" p. 293.

After this, the ſame author gives a particular account of the terrible ſpoil and waſte of the lands of ſeveral other biſhopricks, either by long vacancies, or other illegal means. I ſhall only recite to you what he ſays of Oxford:

" As for Oxon, (ſays he) it was kept vacant " from the death of Mr. King, the firſt biſhop of " it, Dec. 14, 1557. till the 14, of Oct. 1567. at " which time it was conferred on Dr. Curwin, " archbiſhop of Dublin; who having held it but " a year, it was again kept vacant twenty years " together, and then beſtowed on Dr. Underhil, in " Dec. 1589. But he dying alſo ſhortly after, " viz. Anno 1592. It was once more kept void " till the year 1603. So that this church was " filled little more than three years in forty-ſix. " The revenues remaining in the hands of the

" earl

" earl of Leiceſter, and after his deceaſe, of the " earl of Eſſex; by whom the lands were ſo " ſpoiled and waſted, that they left nothing to the " laſt biſhops but impropriations. By means of " which havock and deſtruction all the five bi- " ſhopricks erected by Henry VIII. were ſo impo- " veriſhed and deſtroyed, that the new biſhops " were neceſſitated to require a benevolence of " their clergy to furniſh their epiſcopal houſes." p. 328, 329.

Thus you ſee this eminent reformer and foundreſs of the church of England kept not her hands ſo very clear, as you imagined, from being dipped in the plunder of the church's patrimony. And as they were not guiltleſs in this reſpect, ſo were they moſt deeply imbrued in innocent blood; eſpecially after the ſanguinary laws made by her, which during her life were executed with the utmoſt rigour, as may be ſeen in Stow. So that I may ſay, without the leaſt wrong done to her character, that (excepting the vice of incontinence, with which I cannot charge her) ſhe inherited the very worſt of her father's qualities. And it is remarkable, that the moſt wicked and profligate perſons of that age were the moſt in her favour: Such as Leiceſter, Walſingham, and others; of whom the author of the ſhort view of the Engliſh hiſtory writes, that having already taſted of the ſweetneſs of confiſcations, they deſigned to make the Engliſh Roman Catholics deſperate by ill uſage, in hopes they would rebel, and forfeit their eſtates. But when truth enough could not be found againſt them, Walſingham, by counterfeit letters and confeſſions extorted by pains and terrors of the rack, tumultuated the people with chimerical dangers, only to prepare them for the murder of the queen of Scotland. *

The

* See the preface.

The ſame author gives this ſhort general character of Leiceſter, viz. that he was one of the worſt of men, p. 269, and had all the ill principles of his father Northumberland, p. 273.

But Dr. Heylin has left us a fuller account of him, p. 239, 240, where he tells us that the queen, in her viſit to Cambridge, Anno 1564, coming acquainted with Sir Robert Dudley, made him earl of Leiceſter, and gave him a great ſway in all affairs, both of court and council; and then goes on thus:

"Advanced to this height, he engroſſed to "himſelf the diſpoſing of all offices in court and "ſtate, and of all preferments in the church. "A man ſo unappeaſeable in his malice, and in- "ſatiable in his luſts—ſo ſacrilegious in his ra- "pines—ſo falſe in his promiſes, and treacherous "in point of truſt; and, finally, ſo deſtructive "of the rights and properties of particular per- "ſons, that his little finger lay heavier on the "Engliſh ſubjects, than the loins of all the fa- "vourites of the two laſt kings."

This was that noble perſon, whom queen Elizabeth was ſo charmed with, and loaded with ſo many favours, that he even conceived no ſmall hopes of being one day admitted to her bed, and a partnerſhip in the crown. In order whereunto, he broke the neck of his wife down ſtairs (ſays the author of the ſhort view, p. 273) to make room in his bed, when he ſhould have the happineſs to accompliſh his deſigns on the queen. Yet this wicked wretch, and others as profligate as himſelf, were her boſom-confidents and choſen counſellors, whom ſhe adviſed with, and was directed by, in the moſt weighty concerns both of church and ſtate: In ſo much that the aboveſaid author ſticks not to ſay, that ſhe had the moſt wicked miniſtry, that ever was known in any reign.

reign. p. 273. And what other conſequence can we draw from it, than that ſhe was no enemy to wicked counſels and practices? Since inſtead of frowning upon thoſe, who were the avowed promoters of wickedneſs and immorality, ſhe rewarded them with preferments, and honoured them with her peculiar confidence and friendſhip. This was a ſtrange conduct in one who pretended to ſo much zeal for God's worſhip; and plainly ſhews, that tenderneſs of conſcience was no diſtinguiſhing part of her character; which indeed ſtands upon record blackened with ſuch ſtains of infamy, as caſt an irreparable ſcandal upon the church and reformation, whereof ſhe was the ſupreme head and architect.

G. Truly I cannot but obſerve, that as they, who willingly herd with thieves and pick-pockets, are commonly thought to be no ill-wiſhers to the trade; ſo it can be no raſh judgment to think, that queen Elizabeth, who choſe profeſſed libertines for minions and counſellors, had not the leaſt hatred to perſons of wicked principles and practices.

P. It is very certain, that if inſtead of pretending to reform the church, ſhe had laboured to reform the viciouſneſs of her court and miniſtry, ſhe would not only have kept within her proper ſphere, but acted more ſuitably to the decorum becoming the character of a virgin queen.

But before I take my leave of queen Elizabeth, I ſhall make a few remarks upon that penal ſtatute of her's, whereby ſaying Maſs is made high treaſon, and being preſent at it felony; and accordingly both the one and the other puniſhable with an infamous death. Now to the beſt of my judgment, penal laws can never change the nature or eſſence of things; nor do they make ſuch or ſuch actions, for the puniſhment whereof they

are made, become crimes that were not ſo before, but they ſuppoſe them to be ſo in their own nature. So that they would be the ſame enormous crimes, both in themſelves and in the ſight of God, though there were no human laws to puniſh them. Thus robberies, murders, rebellions and treaſons, are juſtly puniſhed with death, as being in themſelves crimes of ſuch an enormous and pernicious nature, that perſons guilty of them deſerve to be regarded as the public enemies of mankind, and treated with the utmoſt rigour.

Hence it follows, that if queen Elizabeth's law was juſt, ſaying Maſs both is, and has always been a ſin of as black a die in the ſight of God as that of high treaſon. But how is that credible? Will any one have the confidence to ſay, that all the biſhops and prieſts of Great Britain for 900 years together, amongſt whom there were a great number eminent for holineſs of life and working of miracles, lived in the daily practice of a deadly ſin? Did thoſe great doctors and pillars of God's church, St. Ambroſe, St. Auguſtin, St. Baſil, St. Chryſoſtom, and ſuch others commit as many enormous crimes as they ſaid Maſſes? Did St. Gregory incur the guilt of three mortal ſins upon every Chriſt-maſs day, by ſaying three maſſes on that day, as he himſelf ſays, he did? * Finally, did St. Auguſtin and his followers, who converted this iſland, begin their holy miſſion, with ſetting a pattern to all their ſucceſſors of committing daily a crime of ſuch a heinous nature, as deſerved to be puniſhed with the moſt cruel and infamous death? Theſe ſurely are ſuch monſtrous abſurdities as will not enter into the imagination of any man in his right ſenſes: Yet, if

* In his 8th homily upon the goſpels.

if the aboveſaid penal ſtatute of queen Elizabeth was juſt, all theſe abſurdities, how monſtrous ſoever would follow. Becauſe penal laws that are juſt, appoint puniſhments proportioned to the enormity of the crimes, againſt which they are made. If therefore the ſame infamous and cruel death, which the law inflicts upon traitors, was juſtly incurred for ſaying Maſs, it follows, that ſaying Maſs is, of its own nature, and in the ſight of God, as black a crime as that of high treaſon againſt the ſtate; and, by conſequence, all the eminent ſaints I have named, lived in the continual practice of as great a ſin, as if they had daily committed treaſon againſt their ſovereigns; which, if it be not a ſuppoſition, which any man of ſenſe and religion will bluſh to own, nothing can be imagined extravagant enough to ſhock him. And therefore I cannot but regard that ſanguinary ſtatute of queen Elizabeth, which during her long reign was executed with the utmoſt violence and rigour, as one of the blackeſt ſtains in her character.

G. But, Sir, Proteſtants will ſay, that queen Elizabeth regarded the doctrine of the Maſs as an execrable hereſy; and when ſhe made laws againſt it, and executed thoſe laws, ſhe only followed the examples of her father Henry and ſiſter Mary; who had put ſeveral perſons to death purely on the ſcore of hereſy.

P. Sir, it cannot be queſtioned, but that hereſy is not only a moſt grievous ſin, but many times of pernicious conſequences to the ſtate; and may therefore, in certain circumſtances, be juſtly puniſhed with death. But whether both Henry and Mary had always a due regard to thoſe circumſtances, I will not undertake to determine. This however I am ſure of, that their caſe was very different from that of queen Elizabeth. Becauſe

they only punished heresies, which had been condemned many ages before by the universal church: Whereas, if queen Elizabeth thought fit (as supreme head of the English church) to regard the doctrine of the Mass as a heresy, it was a heresy formed in her own imagination, never thought nor heard of, at least before Protestantism, in any Christian nation under the sun. Nay she herself, at her first coming to the crown, ordered a solemn Mass to be said for the soul of her sister Mary, and another for Charles 5th. But after all, Sir, the priests that were executed in her reign, did not suffer for heresy but for treason.

G. But, what! were they not found guilty of some endeavours at least to subvert the government, or some designs against the queen's life or crown?

P. No, no, Sir; it was not so much as pretended: And the only treasonable crimes they suffered for, were for being priests and saying Mass, or doing any other functions of their sacred ministry. Their very blackest treason was their worshipping God by that august and venerable sacrifice, which had been offered to him from east to west in all preceding ages, and in all the Christian kingdoms upon earth. So that honouring that divine majesty, was regarded by her as a capital affront upon her own person, and punished accordingly. For I cannot imagine what other way saying Mass could be strained into the foul crime of high treason.

G. This indeed is a most flagrant instance of the cruelty of her temper. For even justice itself may be pushed too far; and there may be a degree of cruelty in executing laws, though ever so just, and punishing real crimes with too much rigour. But to make treason of a thing, that never was so before, nor can be so in its

own

own nature, and then puniſh it with the ſame rigour, as if it really were ſo, may be called cruelty in the higheſt degree. But, Sir, my attention has been ſomewhat too long upon the ſtretch: So let us if you pleaſe adjourn to another day.

P. With all my heart, Sir; for it is not good to overcharge your memory; and one meeting more will ſuffice to mark out to you the proper conſequences, that are to be drawn from the facts, I have hitherto entertained you with.

The End of the third Dialogue.

THE FOURTH DIALOGUE,

CONTAINING

A

COMPARISON BETWEEN

THE MOST REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

OF

ENGLAND's CONVERSION

ON THE ONE HAND;

AND IT's

PRETENDED REFORMATION

ON THE OTHER.

SECT. I.

The reſpective Qualifications, of the chief Inſtruments of ENGLAND's CONVERSION and REFORMATION, compared.

G. I Preſume, Sir, you have now done with the hiſtorical account you promiſed me at the beginning of our ſecond meeting; and will proceed to give me a lecture upon the uſe and application, that is to be made of the collection of facts you have entertained me with.

P. It is what I now intend to do. For without this all knowledge of hiſtory is but a mere amuſement, and may ſerve indeed to entertain a man's curioſity, but not to cultivate or improve his mind. But, though the facts I have mentioned afford matter for a great variety of uſeful reflections, either on the infinite mercies of God, or his impenetrable judgments, in regard to this iſland; or

or on the irreparable conſequences of a man's giving himſelf up to the deſires of an irregular paſſion; or finally, on the ſcandalous weakneſs of ſome, which may be a motive of the profoundeſt humiliation to us, and the exemplary firmneſs of others, who made a bold ſtand in defence of the ancient faith of their mother-church, and the like; I ſhall wave all reflections of this kind, and confine myſelf wholly to the ſingle point I have hitherto had in view. I mean, the judgment we are to form upon comparing together the whole collection of circumſtances relating to the converſion of England on the one hand, and to its pretended reformation on the other. For ſince it is manifeſt, that both the one and the other could not have the divine approbation, nor be properly the work of God; the compariſon I propoſe to make will, of itſelf, lead you to a ſolid and impartial determination of this important queſtion, to wit, whether the converſion of England from paganiſm to the Roman Catholic faith, or its reformation from that faith to the religion now eſtabliſhed by law, has the cleareſt marks of being the proper work of God, and having had the Holy Ghoſt for its author: But before I proceed, I will lay down ſome general maxims, which I think are inconteſtable.

Firſt, That the converſion of a kingdom to the true faith is moſt certainly the work of God, and that they, who contribute their pious labours towards it, are the inſtruments of his mercies.

2dly, That though God can bring about the deſigns of his mercies by what means and inſtruments he pleaſes, yet it appears to be the fixed order of divine providence to chooſe no other perſons, than ſuch as are of an unſpotted character and eminent piety, for accompliſhing his deſigns of an extraordinary mercy: Inſomuch, that there is

not a ſingle inſtance, that any kingdom was ever converted, either from idolatry or hereſy, to the true faith by men of ſcandalous lives.

3dly, That when a nation changes from one religion to another (if either of them be the true one) it is either a great bleſſing, or a heavy curſe. Or, to expreſs myſelf in other words, it is either an extraordinary mercy, or a dreadful judgment. If it changes from falſhood to truth, it is an extraordinary mercy; and God, who is the father of mercies, is properly the author of it. But if it changes from truth to falſhood, it is a dreadful judgment; permitted indeed by God in his wrath; but the Devil, who is the father of lies, and profeſſed enemy of man's ſalvation, is the ſupreme director of ſuch counſels.

4thly, That the common people and perſons of no learning, who have neither capacity nor leiſure to examine every controverted point of religion by itſelf, muſt have recourſe to certain external marks to judge by, in the caſe of a national change from one religion to another, whether it be a change from truth to falſhood, or from falſhood to truth; and, by conſequence, whether God or the Devil be the principal author of it.

5thly, That the good or bad characters of the chief actors in it, the diſintereſted or intereſted motives, upon which they act, and the legal or illegal means, by which they purſue their reſpective ends, are external marks, on which a ſolid judgment may be grounded, whether it be a cauſe, to which God gives his approbation, or which he only permits to proſper, as a juſt puniſhment of the ſins of the people. To this I add,

6thly, That if the converſion of England from paganiſm to the Roman Catholic faith has the external marks of an extraordinary mercy on its ſide,

and

and the reformation of that faith has on the contrary all thoſe external marks againſt it, an unbiaſſed perſon muſt neceſſarily conclude, that the religion eſtabliſhed in England by its aboveſaid converſion had God for its author, and the pretended reformation of that religion had not the approbation of God, but was permitted by him as a dreadful judgment on the nation.

G. The truth of theſe maxims appears to be ſelf-evident, and the conſequences that flow legally from them, muſt neceſſarily be aſſented to by all, who are not reſolved to ſhut their eyes againſt the cleareſt light.

P. I have premiſed them for no other end, than to direct you to form a true and impartial judgment, whether they who planted in this iſland the religion, now nick-named Popery, or they, who reformed that religion, have the cleareſt marks on their ſide of having acted under the direction of the Holy Ghoſt? For it is certain, that the divine Spirit was not the director or guide of both. Unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that he has been the author of Popery in one age, and of Proteſtancy in another; that is, of two contradictory faiths and religions. Now then let us compare together the inſtruments and means, by which the one and the other were eſtabliſhed; and it will be eaſy to judge, which of the two had the Holy Ghoſt for its author.

G. You have already made your obſervations upon the moſt material circumſtances relating to the characters, conduct, and canonical proceedings of thoſe, who brought the Roman Catholic faith into this iſland. And ſince oppoſites placed near to one another appear in the cleareſt light, as you told me a while ago, you need but follow the ſame method in joining with them your obſervations upon the character, methods, and con-

duct of thoſe, who took upon them to reform that faith.

P. Very right, Sir; and it is juſt what I intend to do in order to convince you, that they are as oppoſite to one another, as black is to white.

Firſt then, St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners, by whom the Roman Catholic faith was planted in this iſland, had their commiſſion from the undoubted ſucceſſor of St. Peter, who had his immediately from Chriſt himſelf. So that the legality of their miſſion or miniſtry was unqueſtionable, as flowing originally from Chriſt and his apoſtles; and they were undoubtedly of the number of thoſe, to whom Chriſt before his aſcenſion promiſed, that *he would be with them even unto the end of the world,* Matt. 28. v. 20.

But they who took upon them to reform this faith, to wit, a layman, a child, and a woman, being neither of the epiſcopal nor prieſtly order, could not derive their ſucceſſion, nor by conſequence any eccleſiaſtical commiſſion from the apoſtles; who never had either female or lay-ſucceſſors in the eccleſiaſtical miniſtry. Whence it follows again, that they were not of the number of thoſe, whom Chriſt promiſed to remain with even unto the end of the world.

G. But Proteſtants will ſay, that the parliament took away all defects, by inveſting them with the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical authority and juriſdiction in the realm.

P. Sir, all power upon earth, how great ſoever, has its bounds, and acts within a limited ſphere. So that although the Britiſh parliament be auguſt and as powerful an aſſembly, as any I know upon earth, though it can make and reverſe political laws at home, and ſend fleets abroad to give the law to foreign nations, I dare modeſtly ſay, it cannot

cannot make a woman a man, nor a layman a biſhop, nor invert the order of church government eſtabliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt; who never appointed laymen or women, but biſhops to govern his church in ſpiritual matters. Acts 20. v. 28. Nay, the parliament may as eaſily make the river Thames flow from a ſource in the Weſt Indies, as make a layman, woman, or child, the ſource of eccleſiaſtical authority or juriſdiction in the realm.

2dly, St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners, as they received their commiſſion immediately from St. Gregory the great, ſo it cannot be doubted, but they profeſſed and preached the faith of that holy and learned biſhop, with whom every national orthodox church upon earth, was then in communion. So that his faith was judged Catholic and orthodox by the conſent of nations both in the eaſt and weſt. Nor have I ever heard of any man, not utterly void of ſhame, ſo bold as to accuſe, either of idolatry or hereſy, that eminent ſaint and pillar of God's church; and if his faith was free from all ſtains of idolatry or hereſy, that which St. Auguſtin taught, and Roman Catholics profeſs at this time, muſt be ſo too.

But was the religion which our pretended reformers brought into England, ſupported by the credit and reputation of any ſuch illuſtrious prelate? Can it be ſaid they were commiſſioned by a perſon in eccleſiaſtical authority, whoſe faith was judged Catholic and orthodox by the conſent of nations both in the eaſt and weſt? Alas! how can that be? Since not only the two great patriarchs of the pretended reformation declared, in their public writings (and the fact is unqueſtionable) that they had ſeparated themſelves in faith and communion from all the pre-exiſtent churches in the world; but likewiſe the Engliſh book of homilies,

milies, recommended by the 35th article of the 39, and ordered to be read in churches, as containing a godly and wholeſome doctrine, has farther declared, that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, ſects, and degrees of men, women and children of whole Chriſtendom, had been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; and that for the ſpace of 800 years and more. p. 251. It is therefore granted, that for the ſpace of eight hundred years and more, the religion brought in by our Engliſh reformers, was ſo far from having any eminent prelate acknowledged to be orthodox in his faith by the conſent of nations, that it had not ſo much as a ſingle clergyman or layman, whether learned or unlearned in whole Chriſtendom before the beginning of the reformation, to ſupport the credit and reputation of its cauſe.

G. But Proteſtants will perhaps ſay, that though the religion of whole Chriſtendom was againſt them for the ſpace of eight hundred years and more, in which Popery reigned univerſally, yet it was not ſo in the former and purer ages before pope Gregory.

P. Sir, if any one ſhould be either ſo ignorant or inſincere as to ſay ſo, I ſhould deſire him to anſwer the two following queries: Firſt, whether it be probable, that the Engliſh reformers, at the diſtance of 900 years, had a better knowledge of what was the public faith and religion of the Catholic church before the 6th century, than St. Gregory himſelf, who lived in that century, and all the learned biſhops of Chriſtendom, who were then in communion with him? 2dly, Whether it be probable, that if this great ſaint, and his contemporary biſhops had known that the faith of the church in their time, was not the ſame as that of the primitive ages, but had been corrupted by heretics,

retics, they would have perſiſted wittingly and knowingly in the profeſſion of it? Eſpecially ſince it does not appear, that either the terror of perſecutions, or any allurements of worldly advantages, or the motives of liberty and eaſe, could render them capable of ſuch an unchriſtian prevarication.

G. I muſt needs ſay, if theſe things are probable, we ought not to deſpair, but that it may at length become a probable opinion, that white is black, or that truth and falſhood are the ſelf ſame things?

P. Well then, the conſequence of all is, that St. Gregory's faith and religion were the faith and religion of the primitive ages. And ſince it cannot be doubted, but he commiſſioned St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners to preach the very ſame faith to the Engliſh Saxons; and it is no leſs certain, that this faith was maintained inviolably by their poſterity till the reign of Henry VIII. it follows, that the changes afterwards made in it, though varniſhed over with the popular name of a godly reformation, were in reality a corruption of the ancient faith.

3dly, The inſtruments of England's converſion to the Roman Catholic faith were perſons not only of an unſpotted character, but eminent for the extraordinary holineſs of their lives; as is apparent from the account holy Bede gives of them in the firſt book of his eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, Ch. 26. where he compares their religious comportment, zeal, and devotion to that of the primitive Chriſtians, in their aſſiduous exerciſes of prayer, watching, and faſting; their entire contempt of all worldly things; and finally, their living up to all the evangelical rules and maxims,

maxims, which they preached to others. This is a true and faithful character in miniature of thoſe apoſtolical preachers, who above eleven hundred years ago, planted in this iſland that very faith, which Roman Catholics profeſs to this day.

But how different is this character from that of all the principal authors and promoters of the pretended reformation? As Henry VIII. Thomas Cromwell, archbiſhop Cranmer, the dukes of Somerſet and Northumberland, Walſingham, Leiceſter, &c. whoſe memories remain upon record, ſtained with public infamy, and crimes of the blackeſt die: Such as ſacrilege, hypocriſy, rapine, luxury, ſhedding of innocent blood, and the like! as has been fully ſhewn in my account of the three reforming reigns, even from the teſtimony of unexceptionable Proteſtant writers. So that the characters of theſe pretended reformers of the Roman Catholic faith, differ as much from thoſe of the primitive planters of that faith, as darkneſs differs from light, or the deformity of vice from the charms and beauty of virtue.

But here, Sir, let us conſider which of theſe two ſorts of perſons have the true marks ſtamped upon their lives and actions, of being teachers of truth, inſtruments of God's mercies, conducted by the divine Spirit, and choſen by him to propagate that holy faith, by which ſalvation is to be attained! Again, which of theſe two ſorts of perſons appear truely ſtigmatized with the marks of being ſeducers, miniſters of God's wrath, actuated by the ſpirit of lying, and made his tools to forward the perdition of ſouls! I think it but conformable to the dictates of common ſenſe to judge, that perſons of irreproachable

and

and holy lives, are in the rank of thoſe who are choſen by God to be the inſtruments of his mercies, to lead men in the way of truth and ſalvation; and perſons of wicked and ſcandalous lives are the agents of Satan, to ſeduce them into the way of everlaſting perdition; and that, by conſequence, the planting of the Roman Catholic faith in this iſland, was the proper work of God; and the reformation of that faith, if a judgment may be lawfully formed from the oppoſite characters of the principal, as well as immediate authors of it, was manifeſtly the work of the ſpirit of ſeduction.

SECT. 2.

The METHODS and MEANS of ENGLAND's Converſion and Reformation compared.

4thly, THE whole work of England's converſion was carried on with the utmoſt regularity and order. The workmen employed in it were all of the epiſcopal and prieſtly order according to God's own appointment. They acted with a due ſubordination to their reſpective ſpiritual ſuperiors, and all their proceedings were according to the eſtabliſhed laws and canons of the church. On the contrary, the pretended reformation was ſet on foot, carried on, and eſtabliſhed by the moſt irregular and uncanonical methods. The chief managers of it, and actors in it, were either laymen, or derived their juriſdiction from a lay-head. All the three reforming princes, to wit, Henry VIII. Edward VI. and queen Elizabeth, undertook the work of the reformation, not in the name or by the authority of the clergy,

clergy, but entirely by virtue of their own aſſumed ſpiritual ſupremacy.

In the firſt reforming reign, a layman, the ſon of a blackſmith, was conſtituted vicar-general, or (as the lord Herbert ſtiles him) vicegerent-general of the king's authority in eccleſiaſtical affairs; had a commiſſion to viſit and reform all the religious houſes, both of men and women, in the realm; ſat in a ſynod at the head of 20 biſhops, 39 abbots and priors, and ſubſcribed in the firſt place to the decrees of it, as preſident of the whole aſſembly.

The ſame uncanonical methods were purſued in the following reign. A child was made ſupreme ſpiritual head of the church. And though the protector took not upon him the name or title of the king's vicar-general, he had in effect, and exerciſed to all intents and purpoſes, the whole ſpiritual authority and juriſdiction that Cromwell had poſſeſſed under king Henry. Becauſe, though all public edicts for the regulating of eccleſiaſtical affairs, were iſſued out in the king's name, the whole regal power, eccleſiaſtical as well as temporal, was lodged in the protector as regent of the kingdom. Inſomuch, that (as Dr. Heylin has obſerved) the biſhops were, by an act of parliament in the firſt year of Edward's reign, reduced to the mean condition of being no better than the king's miniſters, or his eccleſiaſtical ſheriffs, to execute his will, and diſperſe his mandates, ſo that they were not in a capacity even of conferring orders, but as they were thereunto impowered by a ſpecial licence.

I need not ſay much concerning the meaſures taken in the reign of queen Elizabeth. They were juſt

juſt as regular and canonical as in the former reigns of her father and brother. Her ſpiritual ſupremacy, which was no leſs the jeſt than ſcandal of Chriſtianity, was eſtabliſhed by the ſecular power alone, in ſpite of, and direct oppoſition to the whole body of the clergy: That is, of all the ſpiritual guides and rulers of God's appointment, as has been fully proved. In this manner was the whole frame of church-government, as inſtituted by Chtiſt, turned up-ſide down. The ſecular magiſtrate invaded the ſanctuary. Perſons unqualified by their ſtate, even for the loweſt eccleſiaſtical preferments, were raiſed to the higheſt dignity in the church; and they whoſe duty it was to obey, according to St. Paul's injunction, *obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves*, Heb. 13. v. 17. were made the ſpiritual directors of their guides. Hence it follows, that the Holy Ghoſt had not the ſupreme direction of ſuch a reformation.

5thly, England's converſion to the Roman Catholic faith was free and voluntary. No violence was uſed, no threats of priſons, baniſhments, or confiſcations, were employed to frighten the people into a compliance; as is particularly taken notice of by Bede, who tells us, that king Ethelbert, though he encouraged his ſubjects to embrace Chriſtianity, as he himſelf had done, compelled none. For he had learnt from his inſtructors and leaders to ſalvation, that the ſervice of Chriſt ought to be voluntary, not by compulſion. L. 1. C. 26. So that the only force made uſe of in the converſion of England to the Roman Catholic faith, was the prevailing force of truth, preached by perſons filled with the ſpirit of God, and recommended by the exemplary holineſs of their lives.

But

But was the reformation eſtabliſhed by the ſame Chriſtian means? Was there no violence uſed to drag the people to a conformity contrary to the dictates of their conſciences? Or were the biſhops and clergy perfectly free either to embrace or reject the reformation, without danger of being expoſed to grievous ſufferings by it? Were there no examples of ſeverity, no impriſonments, no forfeitures of livings, no ſanguinary laws or bloody executions to convince them of the neceſſity of complying with the times? The contrary, alas! is ſo well known, that we may as well deny exiſtence of the authors of the reformation itſelf, as that it owes its eſtabliſhment to the moſt violent and bloody means.

G. But what conſequence do you draw from this hiſtorical fact?

P. The conſequence I draw from it is, that a reformation, which like Mahometaniſm ſtood in need of being introduced by violence, and cemented with blood, has not the ſame marks of God's approbation, as a religion, which like the faith of the primitive Chriſtians, came by hearing; that is, by the ordinary means appointed by God for the converſion of ſouls to the true faith; according to St. Paul. Rom. 10. v. 17.

If the apoſtles had appeared in the world with pomp and ſtate, abounding in wealth, and in a condition to reward their proſelytes with places of honour and profit: Or if they had come at the head of armed troops, and encompaſſed with officers ready at their beck to ſeize, impriſon, condemn, and execute all ſuch as ſhould have refuſed to embrace the goſpel; Chriſtianity would have been deſtitute of one of it's ſtrongeſt proofs of being the proper work of God. But their entire want both of riches to allure, and of power to force

force men to a compliance, made the hand of God appear viſibly in the wonderful converſions they wrought. And the ſame may be ſaid of the converſion of this iſland, undertaken and accompliſhed by a few poor religious men, without any arms but the holy croſs, or any other force than the perſuaſive power of their words and examples. Whereas all the allurements of temporal advantages on the one hand, and all the terrors of the moſt dreadful perſecutions on the other, raiſed by thoſe, who had the ſupreme power in their hands of making and executing what laws they pleaſed, concurred to eſtabliſh the reformation. So that all the principal means employed to carry on and perfect that work ſavour ſo rank of the very worſt of human politics, that God appears to have had no other hand in it, than that of ſuffering things to take their natural courſe; that is, wicked inſtruments to employ wicked means, and wicked means to produce effects accordingly. For it has always been ſo, and will be ſo to the world's end, that they who have the power in their hands of rewarding and puniſhing as they pleaſe, and ſtick not to employ that power to compaſs their ends, will not fail to have infinite numbers of followers to carry on any cauſe, though ever ſo wicked in itſelf. I add, that as no pagan nation upon earth, was ever converted to the Roman Catholic faith by violence and bloodſhed, ſo no nation was ever reformed from that faith, but by ſuch unchriſtian and terrifying means. Whence I conclude, in the whole, that England's converſion has on its ſide the cleareſt marks of God's approbation, and its reformation is wholly deſtitute of thoſe marks

6thly, The faith or religion, to which England was converted by St. Auguſtin and his followers had the ſtrongeſt external evidence poſſible, I mean

mean the teſtimony of undoubted miracles, to witneſs, that it was not the invention of men, but that God himſelf was the author of it. The reaſon hereof is plain, becauſe true miracles are God's own ſeal; and it is impoſſible he ſhould ſet his ſeal to, or give evidence for the truth of any religion, whereof himſelf is not the author; ſince any religion, but what himſelf has revealed, is undoubtedly falſe, and he cannot bear witneſs to a falſhood.

Now, though the miracles attributed to St. Auguſtin, like thoſe of other ſaints in times ſubſequent to the apoſtles, have not the divine teſtimony of ſcriptural miracles, yet they are as authenticly atteſted as numberleſs other hiſtorical facts, which no man can rationally doubt of. And the ſame may be ſaid of the wonders wrought by thoſe other apoſtolical preachers, who gave the finiſhing ſtroke to England's converſion, ſo happily begun by that great ſaint.

I have already related out of Bede, L. 2. C. 2. the celebrated miracle wrought by St. Auguſtin in reſtoring ſight to a blind man by the force of his prayers; the truth whereof I never heard queſtioned by any. Nay the fame of his miracles was ſo great, that pope Gregory being informed of it, judged it expedient to precaution and fortify him againſt the temptation of vanity, by a letter filled with conſiderations proper to keep him in an humble opinion of himſelf. The letter is recorded in Bede's Eccl. Hiſt. L. 1. C. 31. and ends with theſe words: " It remains, therefore, " moſt dear brother, that amidſt theſe things, " which by the working of our Lord you out- " wardly perform, you always inwardly judge " yourſelf with rigour, and narrowly diſcern both " what you are yourſelf, and how much grace is " in that nation, for the converſion whereof you " have

" have received the gift of working miracles. And " if you remember, that you have at any time " offended our Creator, either by word or deed; " that you always call that to mind; to the end " that the remembrance of your guilt may cruſh " the vanity riſing in your heart. And whatſoever " you ſhall or have received in relation to working " miracles, that you repute the ſame not as con- " ferred on you, but on thoſe for whoſe ſalvation " it has been given."

I add, that John Fox himſelf, who bore St. Auguſtin a mortal grudge, for having taught Papiſtical doctrines, has atteſted the truth of his miracles. At length, ſays he, when the king had well conſidered the honeſt converſation of their life, and was moved with the miracles wrought through God's hand by them, he heard them more gladly; and laſtly, by their wholſome exhortations and example of godly life, he was by them converted, and chriſtened in the year 596, and the 36th of his reign. Acts and Monu. Col. 2. N. 5. p. 105.

This I think ſuffices to convince any reaſonable man, that the faith now profeſſed by Roman Catholics, though blackened with the odious names of ſuperſtition and idolatry, was at its firſt eſtabliſhment in this kingdom confirmed by undoubted miracles; and had, by conſequence, the very ſame infallible mark of truth ſtamped upon it as Chriſtianity had at its firſt entrance into the world. If therefore it was the true faith, when St. Auguſtin preached it, it is evident it is ſo now; unleſs time and age can change truth into falſhood, and divine faith be like human inſtitutions, ſubject to viciſſitudes and revolutions.

I need not take much pains to ſhew, that the reformation is utterly deſtitute of this divine mark or teſtimony of truth, ſince Proteſtants themſelves have ſaved me the trouble of doing it by

by running down all miracles as pious frauds, and pretending that the power of working them has been at leaſt ſuſpended for many ages. Which, though a mere groundleſs aſſertion, implies at leaſt a plain confeſſion, that the gift of miracles never was beſtowed on any of the Proteſtant churches.

G. That is very certain: And Proteſtants pretending that miracles are ceaſed, looks ſomething like the fox in the fable ſaying that the grapes were ſour, becauſe he could not come at them. However I preſume men may preach true doctrine without working miracles; which being a gratuitous gift, God may beſtow it upon whom, and refuſe it to whom he pleaſes. And how then is it a diſtinguiſhing mark of truth?

P. Sir, though the want of miracles be not abſolutely ſpeaking a proof of falſhood, yet the working of miracles, eſpecially when joined with other circumſtances, is an infallible mark of truth, and it has always been regarded as ſuch. So that in the concurrence of two contradictory doctrines, if one of them has the evidence of miracles on its ſide, the other is manifeſtly convicted of falſhood. Not preciſely becauſe it is not confirmed by miracles, but becauſe it is the contradictory to that doctrine, to which God himſelf has ſet his ſeal, and given teſtimony by the moſt authentic and ſolemn approbation. Which makes a very material difference between the doctrine which England received at its converſion, and that which was introduced nine hundred years after by the pretended reformation.

However, I anſwer 2dly, that there are certain caſes, in which the proof of miracles may juſtly be demanded; becauſe in ſuch caſes they never are refuſed by God. This was the caſe of Moſes when he was ſent by God to demand of Pharaoh the

the deliverance of the Iſraelites from the Egyptian bondage. For what regard would Pharaoh have had to the demand of a private man, unleſs he had proved his commiſſion from God by the teſtimony of miracles? This was likewiſe the caſe of the apoſtles, when they were ſent by Chriſt to preach the goſpel to all nations. For unleſs he had ſent them armed with the power of working miracles, no idolatrous nation would ever have been converted to the faith. Laſtly, it was the caſe of St. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners, when they undertook the converſion of the idolatrous Saxons; and God beſtowed upon them the power of working miracles, to ſhew that it was his cauſe they had undertaken. Now I dare boldly ſay, there ſcarce ever was a religious cauſe that ſtood more in need of miracles to prove that it was the cauſe of God, than that of the pretended reformation.

G. Sir, I do not well apprehend the reaſon of this your poſitive aſſertion.

P. My reaſon for it is plain and convincing. Becauſe the firſt reformers at home as well as abroad, pretended to nothing leſs than to introduce a doctrine contrary to that of the univerſal viſible church then in being; to revoke the decrees of ancient councils, and declare ſuch doctrines orthodox, as had been condemned by the whole eccleſiaſtical authority upon earth, and all the guides of God's appointment in former ages. They pretended, by conſequence, to new revelations, without which it cannot be doubted but that new doctrines in matters of faith are mere forgeries, and the inventions of man's brain. They ſet up a new miniſtry, not flowing from the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, but from the ſecular power. They retrenched five of the ſeven ſacraments, and aboliſhed the venerable ſacrifice, which had been offered

fered in all the kingdoms both of the eaſt and weſt, from the time of their firſt converſion to Chriſtianity. In a word, they accuſed the whole viſible church upon earth of ſuperſtition and idolatry.

Now if there was no need of miracles to warrant the legality of theſe extraordinary proceedings, and convince the world that they were approved by God, it will be impoſſible to ſhew that there was any need of miracles for the firſt eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity. For if the church of Rome (which in all preceding ages had been regarded as the bulwark of Chriſtianity by all churches, but thoſe which Proteſtants themſelves diſown) was effectaully fallen into the abominable idolatry, it is accuſed of even to this day; and if the Proteſtant doctrine, as far as it is oppoſite to Popery, be a revealed doctrine (for otherwiſe God has no ſhare in it) the firſt teachers of it, to whom we muſt ſuppoſe it was revealed, were bound to prove the revelation of it by the teſtimony of uncontеſted miracles; as the apoſtles proved the revelation of their ſacred doctrine, and as their true ſucceſſors have done ſince in moſt nations of the univerſe. Yet to the everlaſting diſhonour of the pretended reformation, not any one of the reforming apoſtles ever had the confidence to hazard the reputation of his cauſe upon this infallible teſt; but, on the contrary, they all judged very wiſely, that it was much eaſier to ridicule than work miracles.

G. I commend them for it. For laughing is a very eaſy way of proving. And it is found by experience, that a pleaſant jeſt is many times as ſucceſsful as a demonſtration. But pray, Sir, go on with your compariſon.

SECT.

SECT. 3.

The Motives of ENGLAND's CONVERSION and REFORMATION compared.

P. 7ly, ST. Auguſtin and his fellow-miſſioners undertook the converſion of this iſland with a zeal entirely free from all intereſted views, as is atteſted by holy Bede. And indeed what other intereſt than that of eternity could poſſibly have induced them to quit for ever their native country, friends and relations, which all men are more or leſs linked to by a natural affection, and undertake a painful journey to a barbarous and infidel nation, where, though they had been even ſecured beforehand of ſucceſs, they could hope for nothing in preſent, but the fatigues and hardſhips of a moſt laborious miſſion, among a people drowned in ignorance, idolatry, and vice; and in a word, a courſe of life diametrically oppoſite to all the natural inclinations of fleſh and blood. So that nothing could be more pure and diſintereſted than the motives, upon which theſe holy miſſioners engaged themſelves in ſo difficult and laborious an undertaking. And I inſiſt ſo particularly upon this circumſtance, becauſe when there is nothing to be got, and a great deal to be ſuffered in this world by an enterpize; as there can be no ſuſpicion of hypocriſy or fraud; and therefore, an entire diſintereſtedneſs in a religious cauſe may be regarded as a ſure mark of an interior conviction of conſcience in the parties concerned, that the cauſe they eſpouſe is acceptable to God, and that their labours in promoting it will be rewarded by him in the life to come.

But did there appear any marks of this purity of intention and diſintereſted zeal in the chief promoters and managers of the pretended reformation?

tion? On the contrary, they made not any one conſiderable ſtep towards it, but what favoured rank of being guided either by ſome criminal paſſion, or ſome private ends, or intereſt of ſtate.

King Henry VIII. is known by all the world to have been in his heart and judgment as ſtaunch a Roman Catholic as any Chriſtian prince upon earth. Nay in the book he wrote againſt Martin Luther, he carried the prerogatives of the apoſtolic ſee to ſuch a height, that even biſhop Fiſher, who had the reviſing of it before it was preſented to the pope, adviſed him, though in vain, to make ſome alterations in it upon that article. Yet this very man, but a few years after, ſtruck a blow at the head of the Catholic faith, and laid the groundwork of the enſuing reformation, by withdrawing his whole kingdom from its former obedience to the ſee apoſtolic, and aſſuming the ſpiritual ſupremacy to himſelf.

But was it pure zeal for religion, which wrought this ſudden change in him? Did he conſult purely God's honour and the good of his church in making himſelf ſupreme head of it? Dr. Heylin has anſwered theſe queſtions for me by telling us, that Henry being violently hurried with the tranſport of ſome private affections, and finding the pope the greateſt obſtacle to his deſires, extinguiſhed his authority in the realm of England; and that this opened the way to the reformation, to which the king afforded no ſmall encouragement for politic ends. Pref. p. 2. Whence it is plain, that the two paſſions of luxury and revenge, with which the king's heart abounded, gave birth to the reformation: That the violence of king Henry's paſſion for Anne Bolen was the true and only motive of his purſuing, with that indefatigable earneſtneſs, the ſhameful buſineſs of the divorce; and his deſire to be revenged of the pope, who

who was the greateſt obſtacle to it, put him upon the extravagant expedient of breaking through the divine inſtitution, arrogating to himſelf the authority which had been acknowledged by his predeceſſors for many ages, and by himſelf for many years. Such were the religious motives upon which the firſt royal reformer ſet the Engliſh reformation on foot!

As to king Edward, he knew ſo little of religion, when he came to the crown, that if his governor had been a Mahometan as he was a Zuinglian, that prince might have been made as true a Muſſelman as he was a Proteſtant. In ſhort, the whole management of religious matters as well as ſtate affairs, was in the hands of the duke of Somerſet, his governor and lord protector of England; whoſe ſacrileges in rifling churches, prophaning the ſacred veſſels, pulling down altars, and converting the plate, jewels, and other precious ornaments belonging to them, to private uſes, are ſo well known, that there is no room left to doubt, but that the deſire of ſatisfying the avarice of that prime miniſter and other court-harpies under him, was the true and real motive that ſpurred on thoſe ſtupendous innovations, which were made in the ancient faith and worſhip of this kingdom, during the ſhort reign of Edward VI. And it may be as reaſonably maintained, that a religious zeal moved Antiochus to ſack the city and temple of Jeruſalem, as that the duke of Somerſet and his accomplices committed all the ſacrilegious robberies and depredations, that Turks and infidels are capable of, upon a pure and diſintereſted motive of religion.

Nay there was not one change made in the religion, which St. Auguſtin and his followers had eſtabliſhed in ſo edifying a manner, but what

tended directly to the enriching of the chief inſtruments and managers of this bleſſed reformation with the ſpoils of their mother-church. As for inſtance, by aboliſhing the Maſs, which rendered altars, with all the maſſy plate, jewels, coſtly furniture and prieſtly ornaments wholly uſeleſs, a deluge of wealth came flowing into their coffers. Again, by ſuppreſſing prayers for the dead, all the lands belonging to free-chapels and chanteries, founded for the perpetuating of thoſe prayers, fell of courſe into their ſacrilegious hands. 3dly, By forbidding all religious honour to be paid to images and pictures, even thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, a licence was given to a general plunder of all the cathedrals, pariſh-churches and chapels in the kingdom, which were all ſtripped as naked as a Quakers meeting-houſe, ſo that nothing but the bare walls were left ſtanding. 4thly and laſtly, By running down the veneration of reliques, a devotion as ancient as Chriſtianity, all the rich ſhrines and reliquaries, many of which were of ineſtimable value, became a prey to the inſatiable rapacity of the pretended reformers of thoſe days. A ſtrange way of reforming religion, by gratifying the moſt hateful paſſions of corrupt nature!

G. But, Sir, Proteſtants will ſay, that the lands belonging to free-chapels, colleges, and chanteries, as likewiſe the plate, jewels, and other ornaments of any value, were all ſeized for the king's uſe; and that, by conſequence, the changes in religion made by the lord protector, and others under him, cannot juſtly be attributed to their avarice, but may be regarded as the fruit of a diſintereſted zeal.

P. Sir, Proteſtants, who know nothing of the hiſtory of the reformation, may perhaps ſay ſo. But the learned Dr. Heylin, who cannot be ſuſpected

ſpected of partiality, has told another ſtory. I ſhall repeat ſome part of his words, which juſtify every thing I have ſaid upon this head. Some great men (ſays he) about the court, under colour of removing ſuch corruptions as remained in the church, had caſt their eyes upon the ſpoil of ſhrines and images, and the improving of their own fortunes by the chantery-lands; all which they moſt ſacrilegiouſly divided among themſelves. And again, concerning the order of the privy council ſent to the biſhops for pulling down images, he writes thus: It may very well be thought, that covetouſneſs ſpurred on this buſineſs more than zeal. There being none of the images ſo poor and mean, the ſpoil whereof would not afford ſome gold or ſilver, if not jewels alſo, beſides cenſers, candleſticks, and many other utenſils appertaining to them. And laſtly, concerning the propoſal made for demoliſhing altars, he writes thus: The touching on this ſtring made excellent muſick to moſt of the grandees of the court, who had before caſt many an envious eye on the coſtly hangings, that maſſy plate, and other rich and precious utenſils, which adorned thoſe altars.

Here then we ſee plainly the true motive of all the changes I have mentioned; which, under colour of reforming abuſes, had no other end in view, than the enriching of the contrivers and managers of this pretended reformation. Nay, and the ſame author has let us know, how ſhamefully the king was impoſed upon and defrauded by theſe zealous reformers.

"Such was the rapacity of the times (ſays he) "and unfortunateneſs of the king's condition, "that his minority was abuſed to many acts "of ſpoil and rapine, even to the higheſt de- "gree of ſacrilege, to the raiſing of ſome and "enriching of others, without any manner of

" improvement of his own eſtate. For notwith-
" ſtanding the great and almoſt ineſtimable trea-
" ſures, which muſt needs come in by the ſpoil
" of ſo many ſhrines and images, and the ſale of
" lands belonging to the chanteries, colleges, free-
" chapels, &c. he was nevertheleſs not only
" plunged in debt, but the crown-lands were very
" much diminiſhed, and impaired ſince his com-
" ing to it."

Now it is very obvious to think, that if there had been the leaſt grain of religious zeal in the ſeizure of theſe ineſtimable treaſures belonging to the church, they would at leaſt have been employed in ſome pious or charitable uſes—as the founding of alms-houſes for the poor, hoſpitals for the ſick, ſchools for the education of children or improvement of learning, and the like. But nothing of all this anſwerable to the immenſe value of the ſpoil appears upon record. On the contrary, the grandees of the court (ſays Dr. Heylin) intended to defraud the king, and the commiſſioners to put a cheat upon the court lords; and both the one and the other were prevented by many of the gentlemen in the country, who were reſolved to have their ſhare in the booty. In this pious and religious manner were the lands, plate, jewels, and coſtly ornaments belonging to the church diſpoſed of.

G. I confeſs it is impoſſible not to judge that there was a great deal of knavery, and nothing of religion in theſe proceedings.

P. You will be more fully convinced of it, if you but call to mind what Dr. Heylin has told us concerning king Edward's parliament, which ſets the whole matter in the cleareſt light.

" The parliament (ſays he) met on the 4th
" of November, in which the cards were ſo well
" packed,

" packed, that there was no need of any other " ſhuffling to the end of the game: Becauſe they " all agreed well enough in one common princi- " ple, which was to ſerve the preſent time.—— " For though a great part of the nobility, and " not a few of the chief gentry in the houſe of " commons were cordially affected to the church " of Rome, yet were they willing to give way to " all ſuch acts and ſtatutes, as were made againſt " it, out of fear of loſing ſuch church-lands, as " they were poſſeſſed of, if that religion ſhould " prevail, and get up again. And for the reſt, " who either came to make or improve their for- " tunes, there is no queſtion to be made, but they " came to further ſuch a reformation, as ſhould " moſt viſibly conduce to the advancement of their " ſeveral ends."

Nothing more can be ſaid to give us a true idea of the Engliſh reformation, and convince the moſt prepoſſeſſed in favour of it, that it cannot be regarded as the workmanſhip of God. For we have here a packed parliament, and ſo well packed for the protector's purpoſe, that all the members of it agreed in one common principle. But what was that principle? Was it to act like men of honour and religion, and vote according to the dictates of conſcience? Nothing leſs; it was to ſerve the preſent time. And in this they all agreed ſo well, that even thoſe both of the nobility and gentry, who were cordially affected to the church of Rome, that is, were convinced in their hearts that it was the true church, yet voted for all the bills that were brought in againſt it. And why ſo? Out of a fear of loſing ſuch church-lands, as they were poſſeſſed of, if the Roman Catholic religion ſhould get the upper hand. So that the only motive theſe mercenary ſouls had of deſiring and forwarding the pretended reformation, was to

ſave their bacon; and they would have voted as readily for Quakeriſm as they did for the Proteſtant religion, if it had been neceſſary to ſecure them in their poſſeſſions.

G. It is very certain, that they, who voted againſt their conſcience, could not have a religious motive in ſo doing. But alas, to thoſe, who lay conſcience aſide, and only conſult intereſt, that religion is beſt, by which moſt is to be got.

P. But beſides theſe members of parliament, who were only ſolicitous to ſecure what they had already got, Dr. Heylin mentions another ſet of gentlemen, who came to make or improve their fortunes; and to be ſure theſe were very religiouſly zealous for a reformation. But what ſort of reformation did they come to make? My author tells us, that there is no queſtion to be made, but they came to further ſuch a reformation, as ſhould moſt viſibly conduce to their ſeveral ends. Well then, there I leave them buſily reforming; ſome to ſecure, and others to make or improve their fortunes. And I muſt do them the juſtice to own, that the reformation they made fully anſwered all their pious ends, as has been already ſhewn. But I cannot believe that Chriſt was in the midſt of them; or that they could ſay with the apoſtles at the council of Jeruſalem, *it has ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt and to us.* &c. Acts 15. v. 28. For I dare poſitively aver, it never ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, to make a child ſupreme head of a national church; to deſtroy altars, rob churches, and invade the property of perſons conſecrated to God's ſervice. Neither could it ſeem good to the Holy Ghoſt, that men ſhould become inſtrumental to the ruin of a religion, which they believed in their hearts to be the true one; or aſſemble together to further ſuch a reformation, as ſhould moſt viſibly conduce to the advancement of their

their ſeveral ends. In ſhort, it would be blaſphemy to ſay, that the Holy Ghoſt could have part in a reformation ſet on foot for no other motive, than to ſerve ſuch ends.

G. But what do you think of queen Elizabeth's reformation?

P. I think it was but king Edward's reformation twice ſodden, with ſome variety in the cooking and dreſſing of it to fit it for queen Elizabeth's nice palate. But as to the purity and diſintereſtedneſs of her intentions, I think they will not be found to hold weight in the balance of the ſanctuary, any more than thoſe of her reforming predeceſſors. Biſhop Burnet acquaints us in his hiſtory of the reformation, that queen Elizabeth ſcrupled at firſt very much to accept the ſupremacy. And well ſhe might; for ſhe could not but know herſelf unqualified by her very ſex, even for the loweſt degree of any eccleſiaſtical dignity or function. Yet ſhe accepted it, and diſcarded the pope as her father had done before her, though upon a different motive: For Henry did it to be revenged of the pope; but queen Elizabeth's motive was, becauſe ſhe knew very well, ſays Dr. Heylin, that her legitimacy, and the pope's ſupremacy could not ſtand together. So that, although her motive was not quite ſo bad as her father's, it was mere policy and intereſt of ſtate, that determined her to this capital article of her reformation; and the conſiderations of religion had no part in it.

Nay, there appeared as little true zeal for religion in all her other proceeding: As for inſtance, her depriving and impriſoning no fewer than fourteen biſhops, who were the undoubted guides of God's appointment in matters appertaining to religion; her appropriating to the crown the tenths and firſt fruits which her ſiſter Mary had reſtored to the church; her pillaging and diſſolving all

ſuch monaſteries, convents, and religious houſes, as her ſaid predeceſſor had re-eſtabliſhed; her dilapidating the patrimony of the church by long vacancies of biſhopricks, and taking into her hands all caſtles, manors, lands, tenements, and other hereditaments to the ſaid epiſcopal ſees belonging, as ſeemed good to her; and finally, her chooſing the moſt wicked men in the nation for her miniſtry, and entruſting them with the moſt weighty concerns both of church and ſtate: Unleſs ſuch ſcandalous actions as theſe be the marks of a true zeal for religion in the perſon that commits them, it muſt be owned, that queen Elizabeth's reformation was not the fruit of ſuch a zeal, nor directed by God's holy Spirit, but by the moſt worldly and intereſted views.

G. But, pray Sir, may not a good cauſe be undertaken and forwarded upon bad motives? If ſo, (as it cannot be queſtioned but it may) why may not the reformation be perfectly good and juſtifiable in itſelf, though it was ſet on foot and managed by perſons of corrupt morals, and upon intereſted views?

P. Sir, I do not pretend, that eſpouſing a cauſe upon intereſted or wicked motives, either ſuppoſes it to be bad, or renders it ſo. Becauſe the very beſt cauſe may poſſibly be eſpouſed with the moſt corrupt intentions, and by perſons void in reality of all true ſenſe of religion. But I think we ought to be very circumſpect and wary in truſting ſuch corrupt and mercenary wretches in matters of religion, let them profeſs as much zeal for it as they pleaſe. For ſince we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe, that they love their neighbour better than themſelves, we may juſtly ſuſpect them to be as ready to ſell their neighbours' ſouls as their own to the Devil for a valuable condſieration. It is very certain, that all thoſe were in this pious diſpoſition,

poſition, who voted againſt their conſcience in both houſes of parliament, as Dr. Heylin has told us. Whence I infer, that the religion preached by the holy monk Auguſtin and his companions, ought in prudence to be embraced preferably to a reformation begun, carried on, and finally eſtabliſhed by a ſet of the moſt wicked and intereſted perſons in the nation. Becauſe the former could have no mercenary views, no paſſions of luxury, revenge, or avarice to gratify, nor the leaſt proſpect of getting any thing in preſent but their labour for their pains; and were therefore out of the reach of all temptations to turn cheats or impoſtors. Whereas the latter, who had the moſt viſible intereſt in forwarding their pretended reformation, and were guided by their ſeveral paſſions in all the meaſures they took, theſe, I ſay, were under the ſtrongeſt temptation poſſible of making the popular pretence of religion a mere cloak to cover their ſeveral private ends: And may therefore be juſtly ſuſpected of deſigned fraud and ſeduction, in all the changes they made in the ancient faith and worſhip of their mother-church.

G. Sir, I muſt own it appears plainly from this branch of your compariſon, that Proteſtants have the ſtrongeſt preſumptions againſt them; and that the ſecurity of ſalvation, as far as it depends upon profeſſing the true faith, is entirely on the Catholic ſide.

P. There remain but two parts more of my intended compariſon, with which I will end.

SECT.

SECT. 4.

The UNITY of FAITH on the one Side compared with the DISAGREEMENTS on the other.

8thly, THEREFORE, though the ſeveral petty kingdoms of the Saxons, as likewiſe the kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland, were converted by different miſſioners, and at different times, they all received the ſame faith and form of worſhip. The doctrine which St. Auguſtin with his fellow-preachers had taught, was taught by all that came after him upon the ſame religious deſign. No contradictory ſchemes of faith or worſhip were found amongſt them; nor did one preacher pull down, what another had built up before him, or reform the articles his predeceſſor had eſtabliſhed; but with the moſt perfect harmony of hearts and tongues, all preached one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm. And as they were all but *one body* under *one head*, they were all *of one accord, and one mind.* Phil. 2. v. 2. *and all ſpoke the ſame thing*, according to St. Paul's direction, 1 Cor. 1. v. 10.

But was there the ſame harmonious agreement in faith and doctrine among the preachers of the reformation either at home or abroad? The contrary is notoriouſly known to mankind. Martin Luther, its firſt patriarch and architect, had ſcarce laid the foundation of it, by renouncing the pope's ſupremacy, but ſome of the chief labourers under him began to quarrel with their maſter, and, like the builders of Babel, fell into the utmoſt confuſion and variance about the ſuperſtructure. Two of his principal diſciples, to wit, Carolſtadius, archdeacon of Wittenberg, and Oecolampadius, a Brigitine monk, though they agreed very well with Luther in caſting off the pope, and taking

taking each of them a wife, were of too generous ſpirits to work long under him as mere journeymen, but in a ſhort time ſet up for themſelves, and commenced reformers of their maſter's reformation. Zuinglius, a canon of Conſtance, joined himſelf with theſe, and not long after became the head of that party. But John Calvin appearing ſoon after upon the ſtage, undertook to reform them all by a reformation of a newer invention, commonly called the Geneva-Platform. So that within a few years there were three head-reformations ſet up: One in Saxony, by Luther; another in Switzerland, by Zuinglius; and a third at Geneva, by Calvin; and all three had ſoon after their ſubdiviſions, and became as fruitful in new ſects, as a dunghill is in breeding vermin.

Nor was there any better agreement among our reformers at home. For even before the end of king Henry's reign, which of all the three reforming reigns produced the feweſt changes in religion, the nation, by having ſeparated itſelf from the center of unity, was become like a ſhip broke looſe from its anchor, and reduced to a ſtrange floating condition: Or, to expreſs myſelf in St. Paul's words, was toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every blaſt of doctrine; as may be ſeen in Sir Richard Baker, who writes thus: p. 408.

"And now (ſays he) was the ſtate of religion "come to a ſtrange paſs; becauſe always in paſ- "ſing, and had no conſiſtence. For at firſt the "authority of the pope was excluded in ſome "caſes only, a while after in all. Yet his doc- "trine was wholly received. Afterwards his doc- "trine came to be impugned; but yet in ſome "few points only; a while after in many. So "that the fable of Proteus was no longer a fa- "ble, when the religion of England was it's true "moral. The confuſion was ſo great in theſe "times,

" times, that in parliament one called the other here-
" tic and anabaptiſt, and he again called him Papiſt
" and hypocrite. And this not only amongſt the
" temporality, but even the clergymen themſelves
" preached and inveighed againſt one another.
" So that the frame of religion was extremely diſ-
" jointed; the clergy that ſhould ſet it in frame
" being out of frame themſelves; the minds of
" the people extremely diſtracted, and the nobi-
" lity, that ſhould have cemented them, ſcarce
" holding themſelves together."

This was the ſtate of religion in England in the latter years even of king Henry's reign. But after his death, as if the nation were not already ſufficiently diſtracted with its domeſtic diviſions, foreign ſupplies of new goſpellers, compoſed of Lutherans, Zuinglians, and Anabaptiſts, were invited over by the lord Protector, and his truſty friend, archbiſhop Cranmer; the former being himſelf a Zuinglian in principles, and the other a Lutheran. But all was fiſh that came into their nets, provided they were but enemies to the ancient faith, and hated the pope heartily.

At the head of theſe outlandiſh adventurers (who, like the Saxons and Danes in former ages came for plunder, and to ſettle in a better climate) were John Alaſco, a Pole, and profeſſed Anabaptiſt; Peter Martyr, and Martin Bucer, two apoſtate prieſts. John Alaſco, ſoon after his arrival, obtained the privilege of a church for himſelf and his Poles. Peter Martyr, a rank Zuinglian, was made the king's profeſſor of divinity in Oxford; and Martin Bucer, partly a Zuinglian and partly a Lutheran, had a chair at Cambridge beſtowed upon him. But as they all brought over with them different ſyſtems of faith, it is eaſy to imagine what confuſion their lectures and ſermons, ſupported by public authority, occaſioned in the

Engliſh

Engliſh church; and into how many pieces Chriſt's ſeamleſs garment was torn by the diverſity and incoherence of their opinions. This however is certain, that theſe Poliſh and German divines, and thoſe who brought their principles from Geneva, left behind them in this iſland the ſpawn of that multiplicity of ſects, which have ſince like Egyptian Locuſts overſpread the kingdom, and devoured the very vitals of Chriſtian religion. Inſomuch that it is at length become a ſerious queſtion, eſpecially amongſt men of rank, whether there be any ſuch thing as a revealed religion upon earth.

The church of England itſelf, though eſtabliſhed by law, and ſupported by it, can ſcarce keep upon it's legs, but is reduced to the ſtate of a body in a deep conſumption, dwindling away ſtill more and more, and always complaining of its being in danger from the formidable power and number of the diſſenters, ſuch as Preſbyterians, Puritans, Fanaticks, Independents, Anabaptiſts, Quakers, Socinians, occaſional Conformiſts, Anti-trinitarians, Free-thinkers, and others of leſs note; who are all but younger broods of the reformation, and have claimed a right to reform the church of England upon the very ſame principle, as ſhe took upon her to reform the church of Rome. And it is remarkable, that England was as free from theſe pernicious inſects as from wolves, untill the firſt Engliſh reformers broke down the ſtrong fences of church-authority by proſtituting the ſcriptures to the arbitrary interpretation of every private judgment. But when the way was once laid open in this manner, the whole riſraff both of foreign and domeſtic ſects came pouring in at the very breach, they themſelves had made; and ſet up their ſtandard of ſeparation from their elder reformers, as they had ſeparated themſelves from their old mother-church.

G. But if it be no blemiſh to the church of Rome, that the Proteſtant churches have ſeparated themſelves from her communion, why ſhould it be a blemiſh to the Proteſtant church of England, that the diſſenters have ſeparated themſelves from her?

P. Sir, I perceive you do not apprehend me right. For I do not pretend that the ſeparation of one or many ſects from any church can juſtly caſt a blemiſh upon it, unleſs their ſeparation flows naturally from a principle avowed and maintained by that very church from which they ſeparate themſelves.

Now this is the very caſe between our Engliſh diſſenters and the church of England eſtabliſhed by law: Becauſe it is a fundamental principle of this church, that every man's only rule of faith is the written word of God, not as interpreted by the church, but as underſtood by himſelf. Nay, the whole fabric of the reformation is built upon this principle in ſuch a manner, that they muſt ſtand or fall together. But the church of Rome deteſts it as the very bane of that unity of faith, which is eſſential to the church of Chriſt. For where will ſchiſms and diviſions ſtop, if every man be privileged to interpret ſcriptures by his private judgment, and make that the rule and ſtandard of his faith? Will it not naturally follow, that ſince mens' judgments are as various as their tempers and complexions, this principle, inſtead of uniting them in one and the ſame faith, will divide them into an endleſs variety of contradictory ſchemes of religion? Yet it was upon this pernicious principle the firſt reformers at home, as well as abroad, preſumed themſelves ſufficiently authorized to reform their mother-church. For they all pretended plain ſcripture for their jarring doctrines. Luther found his doctrine plainly in ſcripture, and ſo did Calvin his, and John Alaſco his,

and

and Thomas Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer and Hooper, theirs, and ſo did all the ringleaders of the reformation, both foreign and domeſtic; nay, no one found his doctrine and religion more clearly in ſcripture than plain James Nailor, as his whole crew of Quakers do to this very day. But they all took care it ſhould be ſcripture interpreted by themſelves, and contrary to the judgment of that church, which was the only viſible Catholic church upon earth before the reformation. And is it then a wonder the diſſenters from the church of England ſhould challenge the ſame privilege to themſelves, and follow the rule they had received as a ſacred truſt from the very apoſtles of the reformation? The thing could not naturally be otherwiſe; and it is but conſonant to reaſon that it ſhould be ſo, according to the celebrated ſaying of Tertullian, that what was warrantable in Valentine and Marcion, was likewiſe warrantable in the Valentinians and Marcionites to hammer out a new faith out of their own brains. L. de Præſcrip. C. 42. For in like manner, what was maintained as lawful by the heads of the reformation both at home and abroad, who by their practice as well as doctrine ſet up the proud idol of private judgment againſt the whole eccleſiaſtical authority then in being, cannot be juſtly blamed in thoſe who only walked in their footſteps, and guided themſelves by the very rule and principle they had taught them.

Let us ſuppoſe a doctor of the church of England ſhould tell a diſſenting miniſter, that he ought to ſubmit himſelf to the judgment and authority of the church eſtabliſhed by law. The miniſter would readily anſwer him, that this was ſapping the very foundations of all the Proteſtant churches in Europe, and even cutting the throat of his own church. For if there were an obligation of

ſubmitting

ſubmitting a man's private judgment to any human authority, the church of England became manifeſtly guilty of ſchiſm in not ſubmitting to the church of Rome, which was the greateſt viſible authority upon earth, when ſhe ſeparated herſelf from it. If the doctor ſhould reply, that his church had the warrant of ſcriptures for what ſhe did, that is, the written word of God; which is above all human authority; the miniſter would readily ſtop his mouth by ſaying, that the diſſenters were always ready to have the cauſe of their church tried by the written word of God; provided they were but allowed to be themſelves the interpreters of it. That this condition could not be refuſed them with any colour of reaſon, ſince it was a fundamental principle of the reformation, that the word of God, interpreted according to every man's private conſcience, is the only rule of his faith; and the doctor's own church had arrogated this privilege to itſelf, when it broke off from the church of Rome; and that he might modeſtly ſuppoſe there were perſons amongſt the diſſenters of as ſound judgments, as tender conſciences, and as completely qualified to interpret ſcriptures, as in the doctor's own church.

This would undoubtedly be the ſubſtance of the diſſenting miniſter's defence, if attacked by a member of the church of England. Nay, there is not an Anabaptiſt, Quaker, Socinian, or Freethinker in the world, but will maintain his ground againſt that church, or any Proteſtant church whatſoever, whilſt he is thus ſtrongly entrenched behind the letter of the ſcripture interpreted by his own private judgment.

G. But what do you conclude from all this?

P. I conclude from it, that a reformation, which by its very principles has been the fruitful mother of endleſs diviſions, was not the work of the

the Holy Ghoſt. And then it is eaſy to gueſs what ſpirit preſided in all its counſels. It could not be the Spirit of Truth whom Chriſt promiſed to ſend to his holy church as a guide to abide with her, and lead her into all truth, even unto the end of the word. For the Spirit of Truth is eſſentially the ſpirit of unity and concord. And therefore as he cannot contradict himſelf, ſo he cannot be the author of contradictions in thoſe who are guided by him. Chriſt prayed for them that were to be the members of his myſtical body, that *they might all be made perfectly one*, Joh. 17. v. 23. And conformably to this prayer of our bleſſed Redeemer, who never prayed in vain, St. Paul exhorts the faithful *to be of one accord and one mind.* 1 Phil. 2. v. 2. That *they may be one body and one ſpirit*, Eph. 4. v. 4. That *they may all ſpeak the ſame thing; that there may be no diviſions among ſt them, but that they may be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment*, 1 Cor. 1. v. 10. And hence it is, that unity in faith and communion is expreſſed in the Nicene creed as an eſſential attribute of the church of Chriſt; which therefore is deſcribed in holy writ to be *one fold under one ſhepherd*, Jch. 10. v. 16. to be *one body and one ſpirit*, Eph. 4. v. 4. to have *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm*, v. 5. and to be *under one head, from which all the body being by joints and bands ſupplied and compacted together, receives the encreaſe of God.* Col. 2. v. 19.

Pray tell me, Sir, could the Holy Ghoſt be the inſpirer of Lutheraniſm in Saxony, of Zuinglianiſm in Switzerland, of Calviniſm at Geneva, of Fanaticiſm in Scotland, and of a religion different from them all in England? What other ſpirit therefore but the ſpirit of lying and ſeduction can have been the author of a reformation built upon a principle, which has been an inexhauſtible ſource

of

of diviſions in every nation, where it got footing?

G. It is very plain, that all theſe jarring ſects could not be of God. And ſince they all flow from the ſame poiſonous ſource, it is impoſſible they ſhould be any thing better than tainted ſtreams, and void of that purity of ſaving faith, which is the ſpecial bleſſing and gift of the Holy Ghoſt.

P. We may as well ſeek for figs upon thorns, or grapes upon a crab-tree, as true faith amongſt men, who abandoning the unity of the Catholic church, which Chriſt has eſtabliſhed to be our guide, and St. Paul calls the pillar and ſupport of the Truth, make their own private judgments the rule and ſtandard of what is to be believed, and what not. So that the only difference between the ſeveral ſects I have mentioned is, that ſome went ſooner, ſome later out of the pale; and ſome choſe one way, ſome another to go aſtray in, according as their ſeveral private judgments lead them.

Here then is a plain diſtinguiſhing mark to judge by, whether the religion planted in England and other pagan nations, by their firſt converſion from idolatry to Chriſtianity, or the pretended reformation of that religion, is to be attributed to God as to it's principal author. On the one ſide there appears nothing but harmony and unity of faith; on the other nothing but diſagreement, and a mere babel of confuſion in hearts and tongues. Is the Holy Ghoſt the God of unity and peace, or the ſpirit of diſcord and contention? The kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland, and all the foreign countries, where the pretended reformation is now eſtabliſhed, though all converted at different times, and by different preachers, were all gathered into the ſame ſheepfold under the ſame ſhepherd, and continued in the unity

unity of the ſame faith for ſeveral ages, as all the world knows. On the contrary, the pretended reformation was no ſooner ſet on foot in the forementioned countries, but they were all divided into diſagreeing ſchemes of faith and worſhip, and united in nothing but their common hatred to their mother-church. The Lutherans, who led up the dance, were reformed by the Zuinglians, and they by the Calvaniſts, and all three by the Anabaptiſts. And at home king Henry's reformation was reformed by king Edward, and his by queen Elizabeth, and her's has ſince been reformed by the Preſbyterians, Independents, Fanatics, Quakers, and the Lord knows how many more. If therefore the Holy Ghoſt be not the ſpirit of diſcord and contention, he could not be the author of a reformation, which by its principles gave birth to ſuch ſcandalous diviſions. I leave you to judge on what ſide the truth appears to be.

G. The unity you ſpeak of is moſt certainly a mark of truth. For truth is eſſentially one, but the errors oppoſite to it are infinite. So that it is altogether unconceivable, that if the faith, which was received by ſo many different nations, at different times, and by the miniſtry of ſo many different preachers, were not the true one, nor directed by an unerring hand, nor guided by an unerring rule, it ſhould nevertheleſs happen to be every where one and the ſame. But that men ſwerving from the unity of truth, ſhould run aſtray into an endleſs diverſity of errors, is naturally ſpeaking unavoidable. And if they be united in oppoſing their mother-church, it is no more than what their common intereſt, and the ſupport of a party-cauſe obliges them to: For at the ſame time they hate one another, as I have been told, as heartily, as the ſeveral Jewiſh factions did in the ſiege of Jeruſalem, who were continually cutting one anothers throats, except when intereſt

tereſt and a more prevalent hatred united them to oppoſe their common enemy, the Romans.

P. Your compariſon is very juſt, and the firſt part of your obſervation exactly agrees with Tertullian, in his treatiſe of preſcriptions, &c. where ſpeaking of Catholic unity he argues thus: Is it likely that in ſo large a body all ſhould err into one faith? An agreement of ſo many does not happen by chance: Differences would have ſprung from the church's errors. Where ſo many agree, it is not an error, but a doctrine handed down by tradition. And let any one dare to ſay, that they erred, who tranſmitted it down to us. I ſhall now come to the laſt branch of my compariſon.

SECT. 5.

The general EXTERNAL MARKS of the TRUE CHURCH on the one Side, compared with the entire Want of them on the other.

9thly, THEREFORE England converted was at the ſame time, like other converted nations, incorporated with the great body of the Catholic or univerſal church. That is, it became not a ſeparate ſociety, or new-raiſed communion, ſubſiſting by itſelf, but it was made a part of that myſtical body, whereof Chriſt is head, and by conſequence entituled to a partnerſhip in all the ſpiritual advantages and prerogatives belonging to that body. So that the words of St. Paul to the Epheſians were truly applicable to the converted Saxons. *Now therefore you are no more ſtrangers and aliens, but fellow-citizens of the ſaints, and the domeſticks of God; built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone*, Eph. 2. v. 19, 20. In a word, England by it's converſion became a part of that ſociety of Chriſtians, which alone can glory

glory in having all thoſe external marks of the true church of Chriſt, which are ſo eſſential to her, that they cannot be attributed to any other ſociety upon earth.

I have already ſpoken of unity, which is the firſt eſſential mark of the true church mentioned in the Nicene creed. Perpetual viſibility and catholicity or univerſality, are two other external marks inſeperable from the true church of Chriſt, and incommunicable to a new-raiſed communion.

As to perpetual viſibility, it is clearly marked out both in the old and new Teſtament. The prophet Iſaiah foretells, c. 59, v. 21. that the goſpel ſhall be preached to the end of the world. And it is very plain, that a perpetual preaching miniſtry muſt be perpetually both audible and viſible. He alſo deſcribes Chriſt's future church by comparing it to a houſe ſituated on the top of a high mountain. *The mountain of the Lord's houſe*, ſays he, *ſhall be eſtabliſhed on the top of the mountains. It ſhall be exalted above the hills, and all nations ſhall flow to it.* Iſa. 11. 2. This ſurely is not the character of an inviſible church. Our bleſſed Saviour inſinuates the ſames compariſon and draws the ſame inference from it, Matt. 5. v. 14. where he ſpeaks thus to his apoſtles, *You are the light of the world. A city that ſtands on a mountain cannot be hidden.* And again in the 18th chapter, v. 17. of the ſame evangeliſt he ſends us to his church, and commands us to *hear* it. Now I cannot well conceive how any one can be bound to hear an inviſible church; or how we can have recourſe to it for inſtruction unleſs it be viſible.

But nothing is more expreſs upon this point, than St. Paul's words to the Epheſians, C. 4. v. 11, 12, &c. where he tells them, that God has placed in his church not only *apoſtles*, *prophets*, and *evangeliſts*, but alſo *paſtors and teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry*,

miniſtry, and for the building up of the body of Chriſt, till we all meet in the unity of faith: Whence it follows, that the church, which is Chriſt's myſtical body, is, according to the divine eſtabliſhment, a ſociety compoſed of paſtors and people; or what amounts to the ſame, a congregation conſiſting of believing perſons, whereof ſome are ſhepherds, that feed and govern; others are the flock, that are fed and governed by them: And that this is to continue, till all meet in the unity of faith; that is, as long as the world ſhall laſt. Now if ſuch a body or congregation of Chriſtians, can ever be inviſible, I am yet to learn what means, plain contradiction in terms.

I add, that inviſibility is repugnant to the very end, for which Chriſt has eſtabliſhed paſtors and teachers in his church; to wit, that they ſhould be the *ſtewards* or adminiſtrators *of the myſteries of God*, 1 Cor. c. 4. v. 1. that they ſhould feed us with the bread of life, and be our guides to Heaven. But I have never heard of any one, that could receive the holy myſteries from an inviſible ſteward, or be fed by an inviſible hand, or conducted by an inviſible guide. In a word, all the arguments, which prove that Chriſt has always had, and always will have a true church upon earth, prove likewiſe that viſibility is an eſſential propriety of that church.

As to the church's catholicity or univerſality both in regard of time and place, beſides that it is explicitly profeſſed as an article of faith, both in the apoſtolical and Nicene creed, it has the cleareſt warrant of ſcripture to prove it. Her univerſality of time is marked out by Chriſt promiſing his apoſtles, that the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. For if his church ſhould ever ceaſe to have a being, it would be manifeſtly true to ſay, that the gates of Hell had prevailed againſt it.

And

And again, by his promiſe of being with the apoſtles always, even unto the end of the world. Becauſe, if the apoſtolical ſucceſſion of biſhops and paſtors, in one and the ſame communion, ſhould be at any time entirely extinct, it could not be ſaid, that Chriſt has remained with the apoſtles to the end of the world.

Her univerſality of place is likewiſe marked out firſt, by God's promiſe to Abraham, that *all nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in his ſeed*, Gen. 22. v. 18. 2dly, by the Pſalmiſt, *Aſk of me, and I will give thee nations for thy inheritance, and the bounds of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* Pſ. 2. v. 8. And again, *He ſhall govern from ſea to ſea, and from the river to the bounds of the earth——all kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall ſerve him.* Pſ. 71. v. 8. 11. 3dly, by Iſaias deſcribing the future glory and ſplendor of the church of Chriſt, by the multitudes of people and nations flocking to her. Iſai. 60. And laſtly, by Chriſt himſelf commiſſioning his apoſtles and their ſucceſſors to *go and teach all nations.* Matt. 28. v. 19.

G. Sir, I ſee very plainly, that perpetual viſibility and catholicity are external marks inſeparable from the true church of Chriſt. But I do not ſo very well ſee, what connection this has with the ſubject we have before us.

P. Sir, the ſubject we have before us is the laſt branch of my compariſon between the converſion of England and its reformation; by which I pretend to ſhew, that as England was by its converſion made a part of that ſociety of Chriſtians, to which thoſe marks of the true church moſt undoubtedly belonged, ſo was it by its reformation cut off from that ſociety; and forfeited, by conſequence, the title it had before to a ſhare in thoſe marks.

As to the mark of viſibility, England was by its converſion incorporated with the church of Rome; that is to ſay, with the whole body of Chriſtians then in communion with the ſee of Rome. Now the paſtors of this church, had in their own communion, an uninterrupted viſible ſucceſſion of biſhops from the apoſtles down to the time wherein England was converted. It therefore became a part of that church, which had the mark of its being the true church demonſtrable in its perpetual viſibility. When therefore by its pretended reformation it ſeparated itſelf from the communion of the church of Rome, and ſo became a new-raiſed communion, it ceaſed to be a part of the true church.

G. It is very plain indeed, that it ceaſed to be a part of the church of Rome. But your inference, that therefore it was no longer a part of the true church will not be ſo eaſily allowed of.

P. Sir, if England, when it ſeparated itſelf from the church of Rome, did not at the ſame time ſeparate itſelf from the true church, the advocates for the church of England are bound to mark out to us, in what other viſible ſociety of Chriſtians the true church ſubſiſted before the reformation. Nay over and above they muſt ſhew, that at the time of its ſeparation from the church of Rome it became a part of, and was incorporated with, that other pre-exiſtent viſible church. But ſince it is impoſſible for the Proteſtant church of England, or indeed for any other Proteſtant church to perform this taſk, the conſequence is undeniable, that when it ceaſed to be a part of the church in communion with the ſee of Rome, it ceaſed likewiſe to be a part of the true church.

Here then I ſhall repeat once more my dilemma againſt all the Proteſtant churches in the world, which I think is unanſwerable. For when they ſeparated themſelves from the church of Rome, it either

either was the true church of Chriſt, or it was not. If they ſay it was not, they muſt either ſhew us another viſible ſociety of Chriſtians upon earth, in which the true church of Chriſt was preſerved before the reformation, and this is impoſſible for them to do; or they muſt ſay, that Chriſt had no true church upon earth before that time; and that by conſequence the creed was falſe for many ages; which is downright blaſphemy. But if they own, that the church of Rome was the true church of Chriſt before the reformation, then they muſt own of courſe, that they ſeparated themſelves from the true church of Chriſt, and continue ſeparated from it to this day; which is pronouncing their own condemnation. Unhappy reformation! which cannot anſwer for itſelf without either renouncing the creed, or confeſſing itſelf guilty of ſchiſm.

G. I muſt needs ſay the Proteſtant churches are ſo cloſely ſhut up between the horns of this dilemma, that I ſee no hole for them to creep out at. For let them turn themſelves to what ſide they pleaſe, it gives them a mortal wound.

P. Sir, it was the force of this argument, that obliged ſeveral Proteſtant writers, eſpecially in the beginning of the reformation to have recourſe to the wretched chimera of an inviſible church, as the beſt expedient they could then think of to maintain the antiquity of their doctrine, and ſucceſſion of their paſtors. I call it a chimera, becauſe an inviſible church is in reality a church and no church: For it is inconſiſtent not only with the character of the church as deſcribed in holy writ, but with the very eſſence of its conſtitution, and principal end of its eſtabliſhment, as has been fully ſhewn. So that perſons reduced to this miſerable ſhift give up the cauſe of religion as effectually, as if they fairly owned

themſelves non-pluſed. I add, that a Quaker or Muggletonian needs not be in any pain to trace the antiquity of his church and doctrine even to Noah or Adam, if he pleaſes, ſo he be but allowed to have recourſe to an inviſible church to make good his pretenſions.

When therefore they were driven out of this defenceleſs entrenchment by the forcible arguments of their adverſaries, many of them, as the Calviniſts in France, called to their aid all the broken and ſhattered troops of old condemned heretics, to patch up a kind of ridiculous ſucceſſion, with as many different ſects as there are ſhreds or colours in a harlequin's dreſs. Theſe were the old Iconoclaſts, the Berengarians, the Albigeoſe a ſpawn of the Manicheans, the Huſſites and Vaudois, or poor men of Lions, the Bohemian brethren and ſuch others. A ſtrange ſort of apoſtolical ſucceſſion! which began not until many ages after the apoſtles, was interrupted with gaps of ſeveral hundred years, and compoſed of ſects, all differing as well from one another, as from the Calviniſts themſelves in their ſyſtems of religion. But they all agreed in hating the pope; and that ſufficed to render them worthy of being adopted into the apoſtolical family, and regarded by them as their true predeceſſors and forefathers in God, who in their perſons had preſerved the church's viſibility, and continued the ſucceſſion of her paſtors in the right line. But in reality it ſhews only, what inextricable difficulties, and extravagant abſurdities men are reduced to, when they apoſtatize from the ancient faith, and ſet up a new communion in oppoſition to the Catholic church.

As to the Proteſtants of the church of England, I know not what way they pretend to derive their eccleſiaſtical ſucceſſion from the apoſtles. Only this

this I am ſure of, that Thomas Cranmer was the firſt Proteſtant biſhop and primate of England. He had not therefore any predeceſſors of the Proteſtant communion. And by conſequence, though he ſat in the archiepiſcopal chair, which St. Auguſtin and others had poſſeſſed before him, he could not juſtly pretend to derive his ſucceſſion from the apoſtles, after he had ſeparated himſelf from the communion of thoſe, who were the true and undoubted ſucceſſors of the apoſtles. For ſurely the apoſtles will never own any for their true and lawful ſucceſſors, but biſhops and paſtors of their own communion, and members of that church, which they founded.

To clear this matter by a fact that is unqueſtionable, if Thomas Cranmer, by being archbiſhop of the ſee of Canterbury, was entituled to a place in the apoſtolical family, all the Arian, Novatian, and Donatiſt biſhops were likewiſe entituled to the ſame prerogative. Becauſe they were all true biſhops, and poſſeſſed the epiſcopal ſees, which had been founded by the true ſucceſſors of the apoſtles. But this has not hindered, but that they have been always regarded as a ſpurious race, unworthy to be counted among the true ſucceſſors of the apoſtles. And why ſo? Becauſe by teaching doctrines unknown to the biſhops that went before them; they broke off, or were ſpewed out of the communion of thoſe, who were the true and undoubted ſucceſſors of the apoſtles. So that we may put the queſtions to archbiſhop Cranmer, wherewith Tertullian puzzled the heretics of his time. *Qui eſtis vos, quando & unde veniſtis?* Who are you, Thomas Cranmer? When and whence did you come? Who gave you a commiſſion to enſlave the hierarchy to the ſecular power? Or to make a layman and a child ſupreme judges of controverſies in religion, and the foun-

tains of eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction? Whence had you your powers to turn upſide down the frame of the church committed to your charge, to change the faith and worſhip which St. Auguſtin had eſtabliſhed, and introduce doctrines, to which the biſhops your predeceſſors had been utter ſtrangers for nine hundred years together?

Now whoever will pretend to anſwer theſe queſtions for Cranmer, I defy him to ſhew, that his condition was any thing better, than that of the ancient Arian, Novatian, or Donatiſt biſhops; or that the caſe of his Proteſtant church was not exactly parallel with that of all the heretical or ſchiſmatical churches that ever were before it.

G. But can this be applied to queen Elizabeth's biſhops, or the Proteſtant church eſtabliſhed by her?

P. I ſee no difference, but what makes rather to their diſadvantage. Becauſe the validity of Cranmer's ordination never was diſputed by any. Whereas that of queen Elizabeth's biſhops has never been allowed of by the church of Rome; and her authority is of no ſmall weight. But ſuppoſing even that it were unqueſtionably valid; it would avail them nothing in the main. For in that ſuppoſition they would at the beſt be but upon the level with Cranmer, and under the ſame incapacity of proving their apoſtolical pedigree by a ſucceſſion of biſhops in their own communion; becauſe there was no viſible Proteſtant communion before the Proteſtant reformation. And this alone ſuffices to degrade all the Proteſtant churches from being a part of the true apoſtolical church of Chriſt, which has always had, and will always have a viſible being in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of biſhops and paſtors in the ſame communion, as long as the ſun and moon ſhall endure; as has been fully proved.

Thus it is plain, that as England by its converſion became a part of that church, which has the external

external mark of a perpetual viſibility on its ſide; ſo by its pretended reformation it ceaſed to be a part of that church; and by conſequence of the true church of Chriſt, whereof perpetual viſibility is an eſſential and incommunicable propriety.

It remains now only to ſpeak a word of the other external mark called catholicity, which never was denied to the church in communion with the ſee of Rome, even by its profeſſed enemies. Nay in all Proteſtant countries, where there is a mixture of various religions, we are as well diſtinguiſhed by the bare name of Catholics as a native of England, for example, is known by the name of an Engliſhman. Therefore, as England by its converſion became a part of the church in communion with the ſee of Rome, ſo it became by conſequence a part of the Catholic or univerſal church. That is to ſay, of that church, which we profeſs to believe in the 9th article both of the Nicene and apoſtles creeds; both which creeds (ſays the church of England, Art. 8th) ought thoroughly to be received and believed; becauſe they may be proved by moſt certain warrants of holy ſcripture. In a word, it became a part of that church, which has univerſality both of time and place. Of time, by having had an uninterrupted viſible being from the time of the apoſtles to this day: And of place, by having not only extended her faith to the moſt remote and barbarous nations in the world, though now apoſtatized from it, but by having likewiſe been in full poſſeſſion of all thoſe nations of Europe, where the Proteſtant churches are now eſtabliſhed. Nay ſhe has at this very time biſhops and paſtors propagating the goſpel among the infidels both of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies. Therefore univerſality of place, which St. Auguſtin calls the conſent of people and nations, cannot be denied her. Nor can it conſequently be denied,

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but that England by its converſion had the advantage of being made partaker of the illuſtrious title of Catholic in the full extent of its ſignification.

But did its ſeparation from the communion of the church of Rome procure it any advantage equivalent to this? Was there beſides the Roman Catholic church another Catholic church of a different communion, to which England was aſſociated by its reformation? That is giving the lie to the creed, by which we are taught, that there is but one, holy, Catholic and apoſtolic church. Or was there no Catholic church before the reformation? If ſo, whoever then ſaid the creed, profeſſed that he believed a falſhood: Nay and a falſhood which may be proved by moſt certain warrants of the holy ſcripture. Art. 8th. Or was the Catholic church inviſible before the reformation? That is very ſtrange! for how can a church of all times and nations, and conſiſting of paſtors and people be inviſible for many ages? Or finally, did England itſelf become the Catholic church by its ſeparation from the church of Rome? That is ſtill ſtranger and ſtranger! and indeed the ſame ſtupendous wonder, as if a little finger cut off from the body ſhould become the whole body.

I need not aſk any more queſtions: For the impoſſibility of anſwering theſe, without falling into ſome abſurdity, is a demonſtration that England by its reformation, that is, by its ſeparation in doctrine and communion from the church of Rome, was cut off from that one, holy, Catholic and apoſtolic church, which we profeſs to believe in the creed; and that, by conſequence, it has never ſince been a part of the true church of Chriſt.

However, as it is much eaſier to confute than ſilence certain people; there are ſome who pretend to anſwer all by owning, that the church of Rome both is, and was a true church before the reforma-

reformation; becauſe it always believed and taught all the eſſentials of Chriſtianity. And ſo Chriſt had always a viſible true church upon earth, and the creed never was falſe. Which they think is a full and direct anſwer to my dilemma.

G. But how then do they juſtify their ſeparation from the church of Rome, if it both is, and was a true church before the reformation?

P. By ſaying, that beſides eſſentials it impoſes many articles as terms of communion, which at the beſt are doubtful, and not neceſſary to be believed. For which reaſon they compare it to a human body disfigured with wens and other blemiſhes, though it has all the noble and eſſential parts of a true body.

G. Very fine, indeed! The thought is quaint and new.

P. I know not whether it be old or new: But I am ſure it will not anſwer any other end, than to throw duſt before the eyes of ignorant people. For in the firſt place, their charging the church of Rome with impoſing articles as terms of communion, which are not neceſſary to be believed, is a mere precarious aſſertion, which never was, nor ever can be proved. On the contrary, it has been demonſtrated a thouſand times, that their pretended wens and blemiſhes are found apoſtolical doctrines, as ancient as Chriſtianity itſelf, taught in the very primitive ages, and handed down as terms of Catholic communion from age to age to this very time.

But 2dly, from their owning, that the church of Rome both is, and was a true church before the reformation, it will follow, that Chriſt, in their opinion, has ever ſince the reformation had more than one true church upon earth. For ſince they are ſo generous as to allow the church of Rome to

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be one, I preſume they have no worſe opinion either of their own, or other Proteſtant churches. So that theſe, though all contradicting one another in many important points, are nevertheleſs all true churches. Which I think is nonſenſe with a witneſs. Nor will the matter be much mended by their ſaying, that they are all but one church to Chriſt, in as much as they all believe in Chriſt. For if this large notion of unity be allowed of, the myſtical body of Chriſt, inſtead of being compoſed of uniform parts, will rather reſemble the monſter deſcribed by Horace, with a man's head joined to a horſe's neck, &c. and his garment, inſtead of being ſeamleſs, will be ſtitched up together with as many different pieces, as there are patches in a beggar's coat. But is it not ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that all the Proteſtant churches, and the church of Rome, that church ſo hated and railed at, not only by the firſt reformers, but by their ſucceſſors to this day, ſhould at length be found to be but one and the ſame church? Or that ſo many churches of different communions and religions, ſhould be that one, holy, Catholic, and apoſtolic church, which we profeſs in the creed?

3dly, From their owning, that the church of Rome believes and teaches all the eſſentials of Chriſtianity, it follows by a neceſſary conſequence, that if they judge coherently, they muſt regard the very beſt of their writers and preachers as a pack of the vileſt calumniators upon earth, in continually charging the church of Rome with abominable idolatry. For I cannot poſſibly conceive, how idolatry can be reconciled with the eſſentials of Chriſtianity.

Laſtly, their owning, that the church of Rome was a true church before the reformation, is a mere put off, and does not anſwer either part of my dilemma directly. For my queſtion is not, whether

whether the church of Rome was a true church before the reformation? For that imports no more than aſking whether it was a part of the true church of Chriſt? But my queſtion or dilemma, to which I demand a direct anſwer, is preciſely this: viz. Whether before the reformation the church of Rome, with all the churches in communion with that ſee, was that one, holy, Catholic and apoſtolic church, the belief whereof we profeſs in the Nicene creed, or not? If they ſay not; then the creed was falſe before the reformation. Becauſe they cannot ſhew any other ſociety of Chriſtians, which was that church. But if they anſwer in the affirmative, then the church of Rome, with all the churches in communion with that ſee, was not only a true church, but the ſole and only true church of Chriſt upon earth. And, by conſequence, England was by its pretended reformation cut off from the ſole and only true church of Chriſt upon earth. And there I leave it: For I have now done; and fear I have exceeded in length. But ſince I have been inſtrumental to your education in the Roman Catholic faith, I thought it my duty to convince you ſo fully of the truth of that faith, that you may have no reaſon to reproach me hereafter.

G. Sir, you have acted the part of a true friend, and ſatisfied me ſo fully, that I can now ſafely ſay, it is not education, but a full conviction of conſcience, that determines me in my choice of the religion, wherein I am reſolved, with the help of God's grace, to live and die. And indeed I ſhould be guilty of ſhutting my eyes againſt the cleareſt light, if I ſhould not prefer the Roman Catholic faith before that of any of the Proteſtant churches.

It is true, indeed, I have not yet capacity enough to examine every branch of controverſy by itſelf. But I thank God I am ſufficiently capable of diſcerning

cerning black from white, and light from darkneſs. And indeed, as you have handled the matter, no more than this is requiſite to form a fixed and determinate judgment, whether the converſion of England, or its reformation, was the proper work of God; and, by conſequence, whether the religion eſtabliſhed in England by its converſion, or that, which was introduced nine hundred years after by its pretended reformation, is to be preferred. Nay an ignorant tradeſman may, by the lights you have given, reſolve this queſtion, if he be but ſincere at heart, as ſolidly as the ableſt ſcholar; ſince nothing can be more manifeſt even to common ſenſe, than that all the marks of truth appear on the Roman Catholic ſide, and not one can be produced, that is any thing favourable to the reformation.

P. Sir, it is no ſmall joy to me to find you in ſo good a diſpoſition: And I heartily pray God to ſtrengthen you ſo powerfully with his holy grace, that no worldly allurements may ever prevail upon you, or terrors force you to change the Chriſtian reſolution you have taken.

G. I hope, Sir, my eternal ſalvation will be always dearer to me, than the ſhort advantages and ſatisfactions of this life.

FINIS.